THE IMITATION OR FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

Translated out of the Latine Copy of JOHN GERSEN *Abbot of the holy Order of S.* BENNET, *according as it was set forth by Abbot* CAIETAN, *With Approbation of the Cardinals, de propaganda Fide, 1644. at Rome.*

Printed at ROHAN, in the yeare 1657.

IX. Eng. 22

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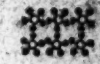

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THE PREFACE
TO THE
CHRISTIAN READER,
LOVER OF PURE
TRUTH.

Here present thee, (Dear Christian Reader) with the Book, commonly knowne by the Name of *Imitation* or *Following of Christ*; as simple, pure, and plain English, as I could possibly draw it from its original Latin Fountain: to the end, thou mayst *drink milke of the* pure *waters flowing out of thy Saviours Fountain*, who promiseth to give *unto him that is thirsty*

of the Fountain of VVater of life, fre
ly a; that is, as I have here impa
tially drawn it forth and deliver
it unto thee, without any desig
of self-interest, or desire there
to defend that Faith I professe,
to advance and glorifie my ow
particular state, condition, and v
cation: as some *others* b surely h
ve done, either by leaving o
what they found opposite to the
Tenents; or by *forcing* c the Tra
slation to the fancy of their ow
humor and *calling*. Both which
vices I have endeavoured careful
to avoid; neither adding any thi
nor diminishing, neither forcin
the words nor wresting them b
permitting the Text to its true, n
tural, genuine sense and signific
tion.

That it now appeareth in E
glish fathered (seemingly) upon

new

a Apoc 21. 6. b As the London and Cambridge e
tions. c As those of Rome, S. Omer, Paris, &c.

nevv Authot, is an anciently approved verity; vvhich vvhosoever shall question and contest, may receive full satisfaction from the learned Abbot *Cajetan*, the Reverend Father *Francis Walgrave*, and other invincible champions of this undeniable opinion. And surely, for my ovvn part, I am more clearly ascertained of this Truth, * by the serious consideration of *the Spirit*, vvherevvith this divin Book is vvritten, than by any *verbal arguments*; (though *they* are also most evident, and capable to convince any disinteressed judgement:) For if ever Son had the ayr, forme, feature, countenance, yea the very humor and Spirit of his Parents and Ancestors; the *Author of this worck*, had that of his fore-father *Saint Bennet*.

If you ask, What vvas the Spi-

* This liberty may be allowed to a Preface, and hindereth not one from abounding in his own sense.

rit of *Saint Bennet*; and consequent
ly, that of his true and natura
children? The Great *Saint Gregor*
answereth: a *He was full of the Spi*
rit of all the Iust; that is, he mo
eminently possessed all the most ex
cellent Vertues of all the Saints
And if (descending from general
to particulars) you would know
wherein the *Benedict in Spirit* chief
ly consisteth? It was and is *Discre*
tion, which is the very Parent, Pre
server, and Quintessence of all ver
tues: and therefore, (as the sam
great *Doctor* affirmeth of the glo
rious *Saint Bennet*,) *he wrote a Rul*
excelling in Discretion; whereb
(with *Saint Paul* b) *becomming A*
to All, he might gain all to their Crea
tor.

And surely the Effects of thi
Discreet spirit have been exceedin
wonderfull; in that it hath con
verte

a Greg. l. 2. Dial. c. 28. b 1. Cor. 9. 22.

verted almost all Nations to God: so as the *Benedictins* may justly say to the major part of Christian people, and particularly to us English: a *Though you have ten thousand Pedagogues in Christ, yet not many Fathers: for in Christ Iesus by the Gospel, we have begotten you*; in that, we first reclaimed you from your idolatrous blindnesse to the light of Christianity.

If you desire to know the further effects of this *discreet Spirit*, as to the practise of Vertue; you need onely look upon the multitudes of b Saints, which it hath sent up to Heaven. If you will read it in Books, you may peruse the *discreet Rule* written by *Saint Benner* himself, and (to name some for all, since they all are numberlesse) the devout works of the Great *Saint Gregory*, the mellifluous writings of

a 1. Cor. 4. 15. b 557001. Canonized Saints of Saint Benners Order.

Saint Bernard, the *Spiritual Conflict of Castaniza*, the Ascetick labours of the modern *Blosius*, the Mystical peeces of our intern Contemplative (of later memory) *Father Augustin Baker*, and the heart-piercing sentences of this incomparable *Gerson*: And you shall find them to be all replenished vvith the *spirit of the Iust*; vvhich consisteth in the teaching, helping on, & advancing all Christians to perfection, in their several vvayes, callings, and conditions, by a supereminent manner, methode, and efficacy, vvhich is not to other Writers so proper and peculiar. Yet this is neither by me spoken, nor is by any one to be understood, as tending to the least undervaluation of other approved Orders and Professions, novv gloriously flourishing in the Church of God: All vvhich vve most sincerely reve-

rence,

ence, and most willingly acknowledge them to be eminent and usefull Instruments (according to their particular way and Spirit) of promoting the divin honour and service, of propagating piety and perfection, and of encouraging their neighbours in the performance of their religious duties and devotions.

a And now to come to the Motive, which occasioned this Translation. I having formerly written a small Treatise [entitled, b *This is the gate of our Lord, the Just shall enter by it*] as a meanes to discern and find out, to continue and persever in the true Faith; which was gratefully accepted by those Lovers of pure Truth, for whom I prepared it: Did *there* engage my self, c to give them *certain Rules*, for the practise of Vertue; which is the other

a The motive of this Translation.
b Psal. 118. 20.
c In the Conclusion of that Treatise.

Branch of Christian Duty: (for a Christian mans duty a *consisteth in Faith and good Worcks:*) But finding my obligation to exceed my ability, and that the performance of that promise vvas beyond my own povver; I conceived it expedient, (both for *my discharge*, and for *my Friends* satisfaction) to begg the charitable assistance of some more able Brother, and to supply my penury out of my neighbours more plentifull treasury.

When presently this truly Religious Monk *Iohn Gersen* (vvhose profession devesteth him from all Propriety in any thing vvhatsoever) signified unto me: That if his divin Books of the *Imitation of Christ* (vvhich lay novv imprisonned, disguised, and manacled in the English tongue) vvere set at liberty, (as it vvas in my povver to do it,)

a Iames 2. 20. 26.

it,) they might be employed to the glory of God, and the payment of my debt.

Whereupon, I forthvvith embraced his liberal profer, and made use of his borrovved riches, to supply my vvant, and satisfie my obligation; setting him at free and full liberty, (vvithout any restraint, shackle, or disguise,) and permitting him to his natural and genuine scope and course; to the glory of God, and the ghostly comfort of all Gods thirsty soules. For a *I hold my self indebted unto all, to the wise and unwise*, to the Active, Contemplative, and Mixt; and I conceive this sacred Book vvill be suitable to all sorts of Vocations and dispositions; every one here finding vvhat is for himself proper and expedient, as the *b Manna, descending from Heaven*, relished vvith all appetites.

Here

a Rom. 1, 14. b Ps. 77. 24.

Here the Hungry may be filled, the Thirsty refreshed, the Sick cured, the Weak strengthened, the Strong more enabled, the Desolate comforted, those in darknesse enlightened, the Scrupulous resolved. Here the Angry may learn to gain patience, the Patient tranquillity, the Proud humility, the Humble content, the Lascivious chastity, the Chast purity, the Sensualists temperance, the Temperate satiety, the Poor riches, the Rich encrease in spirit; and to conclude All in a word, All is here found. a *Come unto me* (saith this Book with our Blessed Saviour) *all ye that labour and are burthened, and I will refresh you.*

b The Methode of this Work is very easy and obvious: For as it stands divided into 4. Books, it aymes at 4. several documents.

The

a Matt. 11. 28. b The Methode.

The First, If vve will come to Christ, a *we must forsake our selves.* The Second, *VVe must take up his Crosse.* The Third, *VVe must imitate and follow him.* The Fourth, [b] *That we may Eat and Drink at his Table in his Kingdom.*

Or thus, (vvhich is all one and according to the clear design of the Work.)

The *First*, Shevveth us, hovv to forsake and abandon our selves, and all vvorldly vanities.

The *Second*, Informeth us, hovv the Kingdom of God is vvithin us, and declareth the benefit and happinesse of intern Conversation.

The *Third*, Giveth us to understand (or rather to feel) the interiour speech, allocution, conversation, and all such like secret operations and divin impulses of Christ, vvith, and to the soul.

The

[a] Matt. 16. 24. [b] Luk. 22. 30.

The *Fourth*, Furnisheth us with the most delicious banquet of Christs *sacred Body*, whereby our Saviour and the Soul are perfectly united together, to their mutual and unspeakable delight and ravishment.

a As to the manner of *Practise*, it may be various, according to the Readers various disposition, and as every one findeth it most correspondent to his own proper grace and propension: And therefore I shall not here presume to prescribe any *set Rules* of use; but conceive it absolutely necessary; that every one should endeavour (besides the reading of the Books) to have the advance of a *discreet Director*; who from time to time (or at least, once for all, if the person be capable) may free him from all superfluous scruples, clear all his doubts, and resolve

a The manner of Practise.

resolve all his difficulties.

I knovv a certain devout soul, vvhich dayly made use of this *following manner* of morning and evening exercise: First, he distinctly read over *one Paragraff* of the Book, (in the order there couched, even from the first to the last, from the beginning to the end,) for his spiritual repast and entertainment. Secondly, he endeavoured to chew and *digest it*, according to his souls present gust, necessity, and disposition. And surely the effect vvas vvonderfull; for it served him, upon all occasions, as a most souveraign Antidote against the poison of vices, as a Buckler against the violence of temptations, as a Spurr for the practise of all sorts of Vertues. This order (I say) he constantly kept and observed throughout the vvhole Book, and found the effect thereof to be so virtually

and

and invariably the ſame, that ev
ry part and particle vvrought al
to his ſpiritual help, comfort, an
advancement. And he hath fr
quently ſignified unto me, th
none could expreſſe vvhat he exp
rienced, or underſtand vvhat h
did, or vvould ſay; but ſuch on
ly as vvere habituated in the lik
praetiſe of devotion: Adding mo
reover, that though he had cont
nued this pious cuſtome, for abo
ve tvventy yeers ſpace, yet
ſeemed ſtill nevv to his internal pa
lat, and ſo he thought it vvoul
ſtill be to him, ſhould his lives pil
grimage be never ſo long protra
cted. This ſurely is that *beſt part*
vvhich he here choſe and embra
ced, and vvhich (he hoped) ſhoul
a never hereafter be taken from him.

There is nowv no more to b
ſaid, (Dear Chriſtian Reader, Lo
ve

a Luk. 10, 42.

ver of pure Truth! for my desire is, thou shouldst be such a one:) But that having thus discharged my obligation, I remain so vvel satisfied, as I conceive it needlesse to put pen to paper any more in this kinde: and (vvere it not a presumption to use those divin expressions) I could vvith vvilling heart and soul breath forth that saying of the good old *Simeon*: a *Now dismisse thy servant (ô Lord!) according to thy word, in peace; for my eyes have beheld thy Salvation.*

God give unto thee (Dear Reader!) and to us all, the b *Blessing of the dew of Heaven*; that is, the fullnesse of his Grace, that it may be vvith us, and vvork vvith us, in this life, true Perfection according to these Books; and in the next, fullnesse of happinesse, in his eversatiating Glory. Amen.

JESUS, MARIA, BENEDICTUS.

a Luk. 2. 29. b Gen. 27. 28.

JESUS, MARIA, BENEDICTUS.

a Luc. x. 19. b Gen. 3. 15.

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Vanitie of vanities, & all is vanitie Eccl. 1. 2.
but ouhe to follow & Loue God.

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE IMITATION OF CHRIST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER

Of the Imitation of Christ, and contempt of all worldly vanities.

WHo followes me, walkes not in darknesse[a], sayes our Lord. These are the words of Christ, by which we are admonished, that we must imitate his life and manners, if we will be truly illuminated, and delivered from all blindnesse of heart. Let then our chiefest care be, to meditate on the life of Christ Jesus.

The Doctrine of Christ excells

[a] Joan. 8. 12.

cells all the doctrines of the Saints: and he who hath his Spirit, will finde therein hidden Manna. But it falles out, that many by often hearing of the Gospel, feel but small devotion; because they have not the Spirit of Christ. But whosoever desireth fully and feelingly to understand the Words of Christ, must endeavour to conforme his whole life to his.

3 What availeth it thee, to dispute profoundly of the Trinity, if for want of humility, thou doest displease the Trinity? High words surely, make not a man holy and just; but a vertuous life, make him deare to God. I had rather feel compunction, than know the definition thereof. If thou didest know the whole Bible without book, and the sayings of all the Philosophers, what would all that profit thee

a 1. Cor. 13.

without charity and grace? Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity, but onely to love God, and to serve him a. That is the highest wisdom, to tend to the Kingdom of Heaven by the contempt of the world.

4 b It is therefore vanity to seek after fading riches, and to trust in them. It is also vanity, to gape after honours, and to climbe to a high state. It is vanity to follow the desires of the flesh, and to desire that, for which thou must be afterwards grievously punished. It is vanity to hope for long life, or to wish for it, and to care little to live well. It is vanity, to minde onely this present life, and not to foresee those thinghs, which are to come. It is vanity, to love that which with all speed passes away, and not to haste thither, where is everlastig joy. Remember often that Proverb:

a Eccl. 1. b Eccl. 2.

that [a] *the eye is not satiated with seeing, nor the eare filled with hearing.* Endeavour therefore to withdraw thy heart from the love of visible things, and turn thy self to the invisible. For those who follow their sensuality, staine their conscience, and loose the grace of God.

a Eccl.1.

Chap. II.

Of the humble esteeme of our selves.

1 EVery [b] man naturally desires to know; but what availes knowledge without the feare of God? Truly an humble husbandman, who serves God, is better then a proud Philosopher, who neglecting himself, contemplates the course of the Heavens. Who knowes himselfe well, is contemptible to himselfe, and delighteth not in the praises of men. If I should know

b Eccl.2.

know all things in the world; and were not in charity; what would that help me in the sight of God, who will judge me according to my deeds?

2 Quiet thy self from te busy desire of knowing: for therein is found much distraction, and deceit. The learned would willingly seem such to others, and be accounted wise. There are many things, which to know, does little or nothing profit the soul. And he is very unwise, who attendes to other things, than those that serve to his salvation. Many words do not satiate the soule; but good life comforts the minde; and a pure conscience gives great confidence in God.

3 The more and the better thou understandest, so much more grievously shalt thou therefore be judged,

1 Cor. 8.

ged, unlesse thy life be also more holy. Wherefore desire not to be extolled for any art or science, but rather feare for the knowledge given thee. If it seem to thee, that thou knowest much, and understandest very wel: yet know, there be many things more which thou knowest not. * Seeke not to know things above thy reach, but rather confesse thy ignorance. Why wilt thou preferre thy self before any one, seeing there be many more learned and skilfull in the law then thou? If thou wilt know and learne any thing profitable, love to be unknowne, and to be esteemed as nothing.

4. This is the most high and profitable lesson, truly to know and to despise our selves. It is great wisdome and perfection for a man, to esteem nothing of himself: and to think

* Romin.

hink alwayes well and commendably of others. If thou shouldest ee an other man openly sinne, or ommit any greivous offence, yet ughtest not thou to esteem better f thy self; since thou knowest not, ow long thou mayest be able to emaine in good state. We are all faile, but thou must esteeme none more faile then thy self.

a Gen. 8.

CHAP. III.

Of the Doctrine of Truth.

HAppy is he, whom Truth by it self doth teach, b not by figures and passing words, but as it is in it self. c Our opinion, and our sense do often deceive us, and see but little. What availes earnest cavilling about darke and hidden thinghs, for being ignorant of which, we shall not be reprehended

b Psal. 93. c Sap. 9.

A 5

ded in judgement? It is great folly, to neglect profitable and necessary things, and so freely give our mindes to those, which are curious and hurtfull; [a] *Having eyes, we see not.*

2. What have we to do with *Genus* and *Species*, (tearms of Logicians?) He to whom the eternall Word speakes, is freed from multiplicity of opinions. From one word all, and all speake one; and this is the beginning, which speakes also to us. Without it no man understands, or judges rightly. He to whom all things are one, and who drawes all things to one, and sees all things in one; may be stable in heart, and remaine peaceable in God. O Truth God, make me one with thee in perpetual charity. It is tedious to me oftentimes, to reade & heare many things:

[a] Psal. 113.

in thee is all that I will and desire. Let all Doctours hold their peace: let all creatures be silent in thy sight: speake thou to me alone.

3 The more a man is united in himself, and interiourly simplifyed; the more and higher things does he understand without labour: because he receives light of understandig from above[b]. A pure, simple, and stable spirit, is not distracted by many affaires: for that he does them all to the honour of God, and being quiet in himself, endeavours to be free from all self-seeking. Who hinders and troubles thee more then thy immortifyed affection of heart? A good and devout man does first dispose his workes interiourly, which he is to do exteriourly. Neither do they draw him to the desires of vitious inclinations, but he squares them

[a] Matth. 22. [b] Luk. 10.

to the judgement of right reason. Who hath a stronger combatt then he who strives to overcome himselfe? And this should be our businesse: to wit to overcome ourselves, and dayly become more powerfull over our selves, and grow still better.

4 All perfection in this life, is mixed with some imperfection, and all our speculation, is not without some obscurity. An humble knowledge of thy self, is a more assured way to God, then deepe searching after learning. Learning is not of it self to be blamed, nor any knowledge of a thing which in it self considered is good, and ordained by God: but a good conscience, and a vertuous life is alwayes to be preferred before it. But because many desire more to know, then live well, they therefore often erre, and reape almost none or but small proffit.

O if men would bestow so much labour in rooting out of vices, and planting of vertues, as they doe in moving of questions; then so great evils would not be committed, nor so great scandals among the people, nor so much looseneſſe in Monasteries. [a] Truly at the day of Judgement, we shall not be examined what we have read, but what we have done; nor how wel we have learned, but how religiously we have lived. Tell me, where are now all those Maisters, with whom thou wast wel acquainted, whilst they lived and flourished in learning? Now others possesse their livings, and I know not whither they ever thinke of them. In their life they seemed somthing, but now they are not spoken of.

6 O how soone does the glory of this world passe away! [b] Would to God their lives had beene answer-

a Matth 7. b Eccl. 1. 6.

able

able to their learning? then h
their study and reading beene
good purpose How many perish
this world by vaine learning, wh
little care for the service of God
And because they rather choose
be great then humble, they there
fore vanish away in their own co
gitations. He is truly great, wh
hath great charity. He is tru
great, who is little in himselfe, an
maketh no account of all height o
honour. He is truly wise, wh
esteemes all earthly things a
dung, that he may gaine Christ.
And he is truly well learned, wh
does the will of God, and forsake
his owne.

a Tim. 6. b Rom. 11. c Matth. 11. 25. d Phil. 3.

CHAP. IV.

Of Prudence in our actions.

WE must not give credit to
every word or suggestion,

bus

but leasurely and warily weigh the thing according to God. [a] But alas, such is our weakneſſe, that we often beleeve and speake evil, sooner then good of others. [b] But perfect men do not easily give credit to every thing that is told them; because they know, [c] humane infirmity to be very prone to evil, and slippery enough in words.

2 It is great wisdome, not to be rash in our doings, nor to stand stifly in our own opinions. [d] As also, not to beleeve every mans words; nor presently to relate againe to others, what thou hast heard or beleeved. [e] Consult with a wise and conscientious man; and seeke to be instructed by a better, rather then follow thy owne inventions. [f] A good life makes a man wise according to God, and expert in many things. The more humble a man

a 1. John 4. b Iames 3. c Gen 8. Iames 3 d Prov 12. and 17. Iob 29. e Eccl. 37 Prov. 12 and 13. f Eccl. 3.

is in himself, and more subiect t
God; so much more prudent sha
he be in all things, and more
peace.

Chap. V.

Of the reading of holy Scriptures.

1 IN Ruth, not eloquence, is to b
sought for in the holy Scrip
tures [a]. All sacred Scripture is to b
read with the same Spirit it wa
made. We must rather search fo
profit in [b] Scriptures, then subtilit
of speach. We ought as willingl
to reade devout & simple bookes
as high and learned. Let not the au
thority of the Writer offend thee,
whether he be of great and smal
learning; but let the love of pur
truth move thee to reade. Inquir
not who spake; but marke what
spoken.

2 [c] Men passe away, but the truth

a Rom. 15. b 1. Cor. 2. c Psal. 116. Luk. 21.

of our Lord remaines for ever. God speakes divers wayes unto us without respect of persons. Our own curiosity often hindereth us in reading of the Scriptures, whilst we will understand and discusse, that which should simply be passed over. [b] If thou wilt reape proffit, reade humbly, simply, and faithfully: nor at any time desire to be esteemed learned. Enquire willingly after, & heare with silence the words of holy men: and let not the parables of the Elders displease thee; for they are not spoken without cause.

a Rom. 2. 10. b Colos. 3.

CHAP. VI.

Of inordinate affections.

WHensoever a man desires any thing inordinately, he is presently disquieted in himselfe. The proud and covetous

are never at rest: the poor and humble in spirit, live together in all peace. The man, who is not perfectly dead to himself, is soon tempted, and overcome in small and triseling things. He who is weake in spirit, and in a manner yet carnall, and inclined to sensible things, can hardly withdraw himselfe wholy from earthly desires. And therefore he is often afflicted, when he withdraweth himself from them; and easily falls into indignation, if any resist him.

2 And if he hath followed his appetite, he is presently grieved through remorse of conscience: by reason he hath given way to his passion, which conduced nothing to the peace, he sought for. True peace of heart is obtained by resisting passions, not by yeilding to them. There is no peace therefore in the heart of a carnal man, nor in

a man

a man addicted to external things, but in a fervent spiritual man.

CHAP. VII.

Of flying vaine hope and pride.

1 HE [a] is vaine, who puttes his trust in men, or in creatures. Be not ashamed to serve others for the love of Jesus Christ, nor to be esteemed poor in this world. [b] Presume not upon thy selfe, but put thy hope in God. Do what thou canst, and God will assist thy good will. Trust not in thy own knowledge, nor in the craft of any man living: but rather in the grace of God, who helpes the humble, and humbles those who presume of themselves.

2 Glory not in wealth, if thou have it, nor in freinds, because they are powerfull, but in God, who gives all things, and above all desi-

a Ierem. 17. 5. b Psal. 39. Ier. 9.

res to give himselfe. Extoll not thy selfe for thy stature and beauty of body, which is broken and disfigured by a small sickneſſe. Pleaſe not thy selfe in thy ability or witt: least thou displeaſe God, to whom appertaines all the good which naturally thou haſt.

3 [a] Esteeme not thy self better then others, least perhaps in the sight of God, who knowes what is in man, thou be accounted worse. Be not proud of thy good works: for the judgement of God and men are different. That often offendes him which pleaſes men. If thou haſt any good in thee, beleeve better of others, that so thou mayeſt conſerve humility. It is no prejudice to thee, to eſteeme thy selfe worſe then any man: but it is very prejudiciall to thee, to preferre thy self before any one. The humble enjoy perpe-

[a] Eccl. 3 12.

perpetual peace: but in the heart of the proud, is envy and frequent indignation.

Chap. VIII.

That too much familiarity is to be shunned.

1 OPen not thy heart to every man: but treate thy businesse with him that is wise, and feares God. Rarely converse with young people and strangers. Flatter not the rich, neither do thou willingly appeare before great persons. Keep company with the humble, simple, devout, and vertuous; and conferre with them of those things which may edify. Be not familiar with any woman: but in general commend all good women to God. Desire onely to be familiar with God alone, and his Angels; and fly the knowledge of men.

2 We must have charity to all; but familiarity is not expedient. It falls out sometimes, that the fame of some person unknowne makes him esteemed: whose presence notwithstanding is not gratefull to the eyes of the beholders. We thinke sometimes to please others by our company: and we beginne rather to disgust them, through the evil behaviour they behold in us.

CHAP. IX.

Of obedience and subjection.

1 IT is a very great matter, to remaine in obedience, to live under a Prelate, and not to be at our own disposing. It is much safer to live in the state of subjection, then of Prelacy. Many live under obedience, rather out of necessity, then charity: and such are in paine, and easily murmur. Neither can they at-

taine to freedome of minde, unlesse they with all their hearts for Gods sake submit themselves. Runne hither and there: thou shalt not finde rest, but in humble subjection under the government of a Prelate. The imagination and change of places have deceived many.

2 True it is, that every one willingly does according to his owne sense, and is inclined most to such as are of his owne minde. But if God be amongst us, we must leave our owne judgement sometimes, for the good of peace. Who is so wise, that he can fully know all things? Trust not therefore too much to thy owne judgement; but be willing to heare the opinions of others. If that which thou thinkest be good, and notwithstanding thou forsakest it for God, and shalt follow another, thou shalt more profit thereby.

3 For I have often heard, that it is more secure to hear and take advise, then give it. It may also happen, that each ones opinion may be good: but not to yeeld to another, when reason or cause requires it, is a sign of wilfulnesse and pride.

CHAP. X.

Of avoiding superfluity of words.

1 FLy the tumult of men as much as thou canst: [a] for all discourse of secular affaires hinders very much, although related with a simple intention. [b] For we are soone defiled with vanity, and inthralled. I wish I had often held my peace, and not beene in company. But why do we so willingly speake, and talke with one another; when notwithstanding we seldome return to silence, without harme of conscience? We therefore talke so willingly,

a Math. 4. 14. b Iob 6.

lingly, that by mutual discourse we may seeke to receive comfort from each other: and out of desire to ease our minde wearied with sundry thoughts. 1 And we very willingly talke & think of such things, as we most love or desire; or of those, which we feele cõtrary to us. 2 But alas oftentimes in vaine, and to no purpose: for this outward consolation is the cause of no small losse of the inward and divine comfort. We must therefore watch and pray, least the time passe away in idlenesse. If it be lawfull and expedient to speake, speake what may edify. 3 Evil custome, and neglect of our advancement, do much make way to inconsiderate speach. 4 Devout discourses notwithstanding do not a little further our spiritual progresse; chiefly where persons of one minde and spirit are gathered together in God.

1 Matth. 12. Luke 6. 2 Act. 1. b Rom. 15.

Chap. XI.

Of obtaining peace, and zeale of profiting.

1 WE might enjoy much peace, if we would not busy our selves with the words and deeds of others, and with what does not belong to us. How can he remain long in peace, who thrusts himselfe into the affaires of others? who seeks occasions without? who little or seldome recollects himself interiourly? * Blessed are the simple, for they shall enjoy much peace.

2 What was the reason why some of the Saints were so perfect and so contemplative? Because they strove to mortify themselves wholly from all earthly delires: and therefore they could with the force of their whole affection, adheare to God.

* Matth. 5.

God, & freely attend to their owne selves. We are too much busyed with our owne passions, and too sollicitous for transitory things. We seldome also perfectly overcome any one vice, nor are inflamed to dayly profiting: therefore we remaine cold and tepid.

If we were perfectly dead to our selves, and not intangled within; then we might tast also divine things, and experience somewhat of heavenly contemplation. The whole and greatest impediment is, because we are not free from our passions and desires; neither do we endeavour to walke in the perfect way of the Saints. Also when any small adversity happens, we are too soone dejected, and turne our selves to humane consolations.

If we would endeavour, like stout men, to stand in the battle; we should surely finde the helpe of

God

God from heaven. For he, who g
veth us occasions of fighting, th
we may overcome, is ready to suc
cour those who fight manfully, an
trust in his grace. If we esteem th
progresse in Religion to consi
onely in these exteriour observan
ces, our devotion will soon be at a
end. Lett us lay then the axe to th
roote; that freed from passions, we
may enjoy a quiet minde.

5 If every year we would roote ou
one vice, we should soone become
perfect men. But now we perceive
it oftentimes goes contrary with
us; and that we were better, and
more pure in the beginning of our
conversion, then after many yeares
of our profession. Our fervour and
proffit should dayly increase; but
now it is accounted a great matter,
if a man can but retain some part of
his first spirit. If we would use but
a little violence in the beginning,
hood then

hen all things afterwards might be one with ease and joy.

It is grievous to leave off accustomed things; but more grievous to go against our own will. But if thou dost not overcome small and easy things, when wilt thou overcome harder things? Resist thy inclination in the beginning, and break off evil custome: least perhaps by little and little it draw thee to greater difficulty. O if thou didest consider how great peace thou shouldest cause to thy selfe, and joy to others, by demeaning thy selfe well, I suppose thou wouldest be more sollicitous for thy spiritual proffit.

CHAP. XII.

Of the proffit of adversity.

IT is good for us, that sometimes we have adversities and contradictions; since they often make

make a man enter into himselfe, that he may know himselfe to be in banishment, and not put his trust in any thing of this world. It is good for us, that we be sometimes contradicted, and that we be thought evil and imperfect, though we do and intende well. These things do often further humility, and defend us from vaine glory. For then do we better seek God for our inward witnesse, when outwardly we are despised by men, and little credit is given to us.

2 A man should therefore so settle himselfe wholy in God, that he may not have need to seek many humane comforts. When a man of good will is troubled, or tempted, or afflicted with evil thoughts; then does he understand the need he hath of God, without whom he perceives he can do no good. Then also does he grieve, lament, and pray for the

miseries, which he suffers. Then he weary of living longer, and wishes that death would come; that he might be dissolved, and be with Christ. Then also he well perceives, that perfect security, and full peace, can not be had in this world.

a Phil. 1.

Chap. XIII.

Of resisting temptations.

As long as we live in this world, we can not be without tribulation and temptation. And therefore it is written in Job: *The life of man is a temptation upon earth.* Every one therefore ought to be carefull about his temptations, and watchfull in prayer, lest the devil, who never sleepes, but goes about, seeking whom he may devoure, finde meanes to deceive him;

a Iob 7. b 1. Pet 5.

him. No man is so perfect and ho-
ly, but hath sometimes tempta-
tions, and we can not be whol-
free from them.

2 Temptations notwithstandin-
are often profitable unto man
though they be troublesome an
grievous; for by them man is hum-
bled, purged, and instructed. * A
the Saints have passed through, an
profited by many tribulations an
temptations. And who could no
well beare temptations, became re
probate, and fell from God Ther
is no Order so holy, nor place so se
cret, where there be no temptation
or adversities.

3 There is no man, whilst he li-
ves, wholy secure from tempta-
tions: for we have in us the soure
thereof, since we are borne in con-
cupiscence. One temptation or tri-
bulation going away, another co-

* Acts 14.

mes; and we have alwayes somewhat to suffer; having lost our soverain felicity. Many by seeking to fly temptations, do fall more grievously into them. By onely flight we cannot overcome, but through patience and true humility we become stronger then all our enemyes.

4 He who shunnes them onely outwardly, and pulls them not up by the roots, will proffit little: yea temptations will sooner approach him, and he shall feele himselfe worse then before. By little and little with patience and longanimity thou shalt (by Gods help) better overcome, then by violence and thy owne importunity. Often take counsel in temptations; and deale not roughly with him that is tempted, but give him comfort, as thou wouldest wish to be done to thy selfe.

5 The beginning of all evil temptations, is inconstancy of minde, and little confidence in God. For as a shippe without a sterne, is tossed to and fro by the waves, so the man that is negligent, and quittes his resolution, is many wayes tempted. [a]Fire tryes iron, and temptation a just man. We know not many times what we can do: for temptation shewes what we are. We must be watchfull, and especially in the beginning of the temptation: for then is the enemy more easily vanquished, if he be not suffered to enter the doore of the heart: but be resisted without the threshold, at his first knocke. Whereupon one said: *Resist the beginnings; after remedy comes too late.* For first occurres to the minde a simple thought; then a strong imagination; afterwards delectation, and

[a] Eccl 31.

an

an evil motion, and consent. And so by little and little the wicked enemie gets full entrance, whilest he is not resisted at first. And so much the longer as a man is negligent in resisting; the weaker does he become dayly, and the enemie more powerfull against him.

6 Some suffer greater temptations in the beginning of their conversion, and some in the end. Some againe are much troubled all their life time. Some are but lightly tempted, according to the wisdome and equity of the divine Ordination, which weighs the states and merrits of men, and preordaines all for the salvation of his elect.

7 We must not therefore despayre, when we are tempted; but pray more fervently to God, that he will vouchsafe to helpe us in all tribulation: who no doubt, according to the saying of Saint Paul, * *will make*

* 1. Cor. 10.

with temptation such issue, that we may be able to sustain it. Let us humble our souls therefore under the hand of God in all tribulation and temptation: [a] for he will save and exalt the humble in spirit.

8 In temptations and tribulations a man is proved, how much he hath proffited: and his merrit is greater thereby, and his vertue made more apparent. Neither is it much, if a man be devout and fervent, when he feeles no difficulty: but if in time of adversity he carry himself patiently, there is hope of great proffit. Many are preserved from great temptations, who in lesser are dayly overcome: that being humbled they may never presume of themselves in great matters, who are so weake in small occasions.

[a] 1. Pet. 5.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Of avoiding rash judgement.

1 TUrne thy eyes upon thy selfe, and take heede of judging the actions of others. [a] In judging others man laboures in vaine, often erres, easily sinnes: [b] but in judging and discussing himselfe, he labours alwayes profitably. As we affect a thing, so do we often judge of it: for private affection easily bereaves us of true judgement. If God were alwayes the pure intention of our desire, we should not so easily be troubled for the resistance of our owne opinion.

2 But some inward secret inclination, or outward affection, does often concurre, which also drawes us after it. Many seeke themselves secretly in the things which they doe, and knowe it not. They

a Mich. 7. Rom. 2. b Rom. 2.

seeme also to live in good peace of minde, when things are done according to their will and iudgement: but if they be done otherwise then they desire, they are soone moved and growe sad. [a] The diversities of iudgements and opinions, are many times the cause of dissentions amongst friends and citizens, amongst religious and devout persons.

3 An old custome is hardly broken: and no man is lead willingly further then himselfe likes If thou rely more upon thy own reason and industry, [b] then upon the subiective vertue to Iesus Christ, thou shalt rarely and hardly be an illuminated man; for God will have us to be perfectly subiect to him; and to transcend all reason through inflamed love.

a Matth. 20. Luk. 22. b Ier. 13.

CHAP. XV.

Of works done out of charity.

1 FOr no worldly thing, nor for the love of any man whatsoever, is the least evil to be committed: [a] yet for the good of some one standing in neede, a good worke sometimes is to be left of, or changed into a better. For by so doing, the good work is not lost, but changed into a better. Without charity the exteriour worke profits nothing: [b] but whatsoever is done out of charity, be it never so little and contemptible, is made wholy profitable: for God weighes more the affection, then the action.

2 He does much, that loves much. He does much, that does a thing well. He does well, who rather serves the community, then his own will. [c] That seemes often-

a Matth. 18. b 1. Cor. 13. c Luk. 7.

times to be charity, which is rather carnality: [a] for carnal inclination, self-will, hope of reward, desire of commodity, will seldome be wanting.

3 Whosoever hath true and perfect charity, seekes himselfe in nothing, but in all things desires the onely glory of God. [b] He envies none, because he loves no private joy; neither will he rejoyce in himselfe, but above all good, wishes to enjoy God. [c] He attributes nothing that is good to any man, but referres it wholy to God, from whom, as frō a fountaine, all things proceede; in whom, as in their end, all the Saints joyfully rest. O he that had but one sparke of true charity, would certainly perceive all earthly things to be full of vanity.

a Phil. 2. b Phil. 2. 1. Cor. 13. c Psal. 17. 22.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

Of bearing with the defects of others.

1 WHat a man cannot mend in himself, nor in others, he must patiently suffer, untill God ordain otherwise. [a]Thinke that perhaps it is better so for thy triall and patience, without which our merits are not much to be weighed. Thou must pray not withstanding when thou hast such impediments, that God would vouchsafe to assist thee, and make thee able to beare them well.

2 If any one being once or twice admonished, does not yeild unto thee, do not contend with him; but commit all to God, that his will may be done [b] and he honoured in all his servants, who knowes how to turne evil into good. [c]Endeavour to be patient in bearing with the

a Matth. 6. and Luk. 12. b Matth. 6. c 2. Thess. 3. & Gal. 6.

defects of others, and any infirmities whatsoever; since thou thy selfe hast many things, which others must bear withall. If thou canst not make thy self as thou would'st; how canst thou expect to have another according to thy liking? We would willingly have others perfect, and yet we amend not our own faults.

3 We will have others to be strictly corrected, and will not be corrected our selves. The large liberty of others displeases us; and yet we will not be denyed what we desire. We will have others restrained by lawes; but in no sort will we suffer our selves to be so. By this it appeares, how rarely we love our neighbour as our selves. If all were perfect, what should we have to suffer from others for God?

4 But now God hath so ordained, that we must learne to beare one

another's

anothers [a] burthens: for there is no man without defect, [b] no man without burthen, no man sufficient of himself, no man wise enough for himself: we ought therefore to beare with one another, comfort, helpe, instruct, and admonish one another. Every ones vertue is best discovered by occasion of adversity: for occasions make not a man fraile, but shew what he is.

a Gal. 6. b 1. Thes. 5. and 1. Cor. 12.

CHAP. XVII.

Of Monasticall life.

1 THou must learn to break thy will in many things, if thou wilt live in peace and concord with others. It is no small matter to dwell in Monasteries, or in Congregation, and there to converse without complaint, and to persevere faithfull till death. Blessed is he,

who

a Gal. 6. b Luc. 1.

who hath there lived well, and ended happily. If thou wilt be ſtable and proffit as thou oughteſt to do; eſteeme thy ſelf as a baniſhed man, and a pilgrime upon earth. Thou muſt be made a fool for Chriſts ſake, if thou wilt leade a religious life.

2 The habit and tonſure, do contribute little: [a] but the change of manners, and intire mortification of paſſions, make a true religious man. [b] Who ſeekes any thing elſe but purely God, and the good of his ſoule, ſhall finde nothing but tribulation and ſorrow. Neither can he remaine long in peace, who does not endeavour to be the leaſt, and ſubject to all.

3 Thou didſt come to ſerve, not to rule: know thou art called to ſuffer and labour, and not to be idle and prate. [c] Here men are tried, as gold in the furnace. Here no man can

a 2. Tim. 3. b Eccl. 1. and Eccli. 2. c Mach. 29. Wiſd. 3.

can be stable, unlesse he humble himselfe with all his heart for the love of God.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of the examples of the holy Fathers.

1 BEhold the lively examples of the holy [a] Fathers, in whome true perfection and Religion shined, and thou shalt see how little, and almost nothing that is, which we doe. Alas, what is our life compared to theirs? The Saints and friends of Christ, served our Lord in hunger, and thirst, in coldnesse and nakednesse, in labour and wearinesse, in watchings and fastings, in prayers and holy meditations, in persecutions and many reproaches.

2 O how many and grievous tribulations suffered the Apostles and Martyrs, Confessours, Virgins, and all the rest, who desired to follow the

[a] Heb. 11.

the steps of Christ? [a] For they hated their lives in this world, that they might possesse them in everlasting life. O how strict and abandouned lives did the holy Fathers lead in the wildernesse? O how long and grievous temptations did they suffer? How frequently were they vexed by the enemie? How continual and fervent prayers did they offer to God? What rigorous abstinence did they undergoe? How great zeal and fervour had they of their spiritual proffit? What strong war did they wage for the conquering of vices? How pure and upright was their intention to God? All the day they laboured, and in the night they attended to continual prayer: though in labouring they ceased not from mentall prayer.

3 They spent all their time profitably; every houre seemed short to them

a Luc. 12. Matth. 17.

em to attend to God: & through
e great sweetnesse of contempla-
ion, they forgot the necessity of
orporal refection: they renoun-
ed all riches, dignities, honours,
einds, and kindred: they desired
othing belonging to the world:
ey scarce tooke what was neces-
ary for the sustaining of life: they
rieved to serve their bodies even
n necessity. They were poore the-
efore in earthly things, but very
ich in grace and vertues. Out-
wardly they wanted, but inwardly
hey were repleniſhed with grace
nd divine comfort.

4 They were strangers to the world, but near and familiar freinds to God. [b] They seemed to them-selves as nothing, and were by this world despised; but precious and beloved in the sight of God. They were grounded in true humility, li-

ved

a Matth. 19. b Iam. 4.

ved in simple obedience, walked in charity and patience: and therefore they profited dayly in spirit, and obtained great favour with God. They are given for an example to all Religious: and they should more stirre us up to spiritual fervour, then the number of cold and negligent Religious to relaxation.

5 O how great was the fervour of all religious in the beginning of their institution? O how great devotion to prayer? How great emulation of vertue? How exact discipline flourished? How great reverence and obedience, under the rule of a maister, was in all things observed? Their foot-steps yet remaining, do testify, that they were truly perfect and holy men: who fighting so valliantly, troade the world under their feete. Now is he much accounted of, who is not a transgressour of his rule; who can with

patience

patience indure what he hath professed.

6 O coldnesse and negligence of our state, that we so soone decline from our first fervour: and now through sloath, and tepidity, we are weary of our lives! Would to God the desire of advancement in verrue were not wholy asleepe in thee, who hast often beheld so many examples of devout persons!

CHAP. XIX.

Of the exercices of a good religious man.

1 THe life of a good religious man ought to excell in all vertues: that he may interiourly be such, as exteriourly he seemes to men. And according to reason he ought to be much more interiourly, then what exteriourly appeares: for the beholder of our heart is

Matth. 5. 6 Mal. 131.

God, [a] whom we ought most highly to reverence, whersoever we are, and walke as Angells pure in his sight. [b] We must renew every day our resolution, and excite ourselves to fervour; as if this were the first day of our conversion, and say: Assist me, ô Lord my God, in my good purpose, and thy holy service: and graunt that now this day I may perfectly beginne; for it is nothing that I have hitherto done.

2 According to our resolution, shall be the successe of our profit: and much diligence is necessary for him that will profit much. For if he often failes, that makes a strong resolution: what will he doe, who [illegible] or lesse stedfastly resolves upon any thing? The not performing of our purpose happens many wayes: and the light omission of our exercises, rarely passes without some

[a] Heb. 4. [b] Psal. 15.

some losse. The purpose of iust men, dependes rather upon the grace of God, then upon their owne wisdome: in whom they also alwayes confide, whatsoever they undertake. [a]For man purposes, and God disposes, neither is the way of man in his owne hands.

3 If for pieties sake, or intention of fraternall profit, our accustomed exercise be sometimes omitted, it may be afterwards easily recovered. But if through tediousnesse of minde, or negligence, it be lightly left of, it is worthy of blame, and will prove hurtfull. [b]Endeavour what we can, yet shall we lightly faile in many things. Notwithstanding something certaine is alwayes to be purposed, especially against that which most hinders us. Our exteriour and interiour are also to be examined and ordered, because

a Prov. 16. b Eccl. 7.

cause both are expedient to our advancement.

4 If thou canst not alwayes recollect thy selfe, yet doe it sometimes: at least once a day, to witt, in the morning, or the evening. [a] In the morning resolve; in the evening examine the performance how thou hast this day behaved thy selfe in thought, word, and deede: for in these perhaps thou hast often offended God and thy neighbour. Bestirre thy selfe like a man against all diabolicall sleights: bridle gluttony, and thou shalt more easily curbe all other inclinations of the flesh. Be never altogether idle: but either reading, or writing, or praying, or meditating, or doing some proffitable thing for the commoo good. Corporall exercises notwithstanding are discreetly to be used, and not equally to be undertaken by all.

[a] Deut. 4.

5 Thos

5 Those things which are not common, are not to be exposed to publike view: for private things are more safely done in secret. Yet art thou to take heede, that thou be not slack to common exercises, and more forward to private: but having faithfully and fully accomplished what thou art bound to doe and is injoyned thee; if thou hast further leasure, returne to thy selfe, as thy devotion shall move thee. All cannot have the selfe same exercise: but one is more proper for this person, another for that. Moreover according to the time and occasion, divers exercises are more pleasing: for some relish better upon working dayes, others upon holy dayes. Some are necessary in time of temptation, others in time of peace and tranquillity. Some, we willingly thinke on, when we are sad; and others, when we are joy-

full in our Lord.

6 Upon principall holy dayes, our good exercises are to be renewed, and the suffrages of the Saints to be more fervently imployed. From feast to feast we must resolve with our selves, as if we were then to depart out of this world, and to come to the eternall feasts in the next. And therefore we ought carefully to prepare our selves at holy times, and to live more devoutly, and keepe all observance more exactly, as if we were shortly to receive the reward of our labour from God.

7 And if it be differred, let us believe our selves not well prepared, and unworthy as yet of that great glory, which shall be revealed in us at the time appointed: and in the meane time let us labour to prepare our selves better for our depar-

departure. [a] *Blessed is the servant* (sayes Luke the Evangelist) *whom when his Lord shall come, he shall finde watching* [b] *Amen I say unto you, he shall place him over all his possessions.*

a Luke 12. b Matth. 24.

CHAP. XX.

Of the love of solitude and silence.

SEeke out a fitt time to attende to thy selfe, and often call to minde the benefitts of God. Leave curiosities. [a] Reade such things, as may cause rather compunction, then occupation. If thou withdrawe thy selfe from superfluous talke, and idle wandring abroad, and from hearing of newes and tales, thou shalt finde time sufficient and fitt, to exercise thy selfe in good meditations. [b] The greatest Saints avoyded the company of men, as much as they

a Eccl. 3. b Heb. 11.

could, and chose to live to God i
secret.

2 I returned lesse man (said one
as often as I was amongst men
This we often experience, when w
talke long. It is easier to keepe s
lence altogether, then not to ex
ceede in words. It is easier for on
to stay at home, then to demeane
himselfe abroad as he ought. He
therefore, who intendes to attaine
to internall and spirituall things,
ought with Jesus to withdrawe
himselfe from the multitude. No
man goes safely abroad, but he who
willingly stayes at home. No man
securely speakes, but he who wil
lingly holds his peace. No man se
curely gouvernes, but he who de
lights to live in subjection. No man
securely commands, but he who
hath learned well to obey.

3 No man securely rejoyces, un
lesse

a Matth. 4.

leſſe he have within him the teſti-
mony of a good conſcience. Yet
the ſecurity of the Saints, was al-
wayes full of the feare of God. Nei-
ther were they leſſe carefull and
humble in themſelves, though they
ſhined with grace and great ver-
tues. But the ſecurity of evill men,
riſes from pride and preſumption,
which in the end deceives them.
Never promiſe to thy ſelfe ſecuri-
ty in this life; though thou ſeeme
to thy ſelfe to be a good monke, or
a devout heremite.

4 Thoſe oftentimes, who were
better in the judgement of men,
were in greater danger, through
their too much confidence. It is
proffitable therefore to many, not
to be altogether free from tempta-
tions, but to be often aſſaulted;
leaſt they ſhould be too ſecure:
and ſo perhaps be puffed up with
pride, or give themſelves too free-

ly to outward comforts. O how good a conscience should he keepe, who would never seeke after transitory joy, nor busy himselfe with the things of this world! O how great peace and quietnesse should he possesse, who would cut of all vaine sollicitude; and onely thinke of divine things, and such as conduce to the good of his soule, and place all his hope in God!

5 No man is worthy of heavenly consolation, who does not diligently exercise himselfe in holy compunction. If thou desirest true contrition of heart, enter into thy closet, and exclude the tumults of the world, as it is written: [a] *Be contrite in your closets.* Thou shalt finde in thy cell, what thou shalt often loose abroad. Thy cell if thou continue in it growes sweete; and if thou love not to stay in it, becomes

a Psal. 4.

mes teadious If in the beginning of thy conversion thou doest cultivate and keepe it well, it will be afterwards to thee a deare freind, and most delightfull comfort.

6 In silence, and quiet the devout soule reapes profit, and learnes the secrets of holy Scriptures. There she findes floods of teares, wherein she may every night wash, and cleanse her selfe; that she may become so much more familiar with her maker, by how much further she lives from all worldly tumults. For to him that withdrawes himselfe from his acquaintance, and freinds, God with his holy Angells will draw neare. Better is it for a man to lye hidd, and take care of himselfe, then neglecting himselfe, to doe miracles. It is laudable for a religious man to goe seldome abroad, and to avoyde seeing, or being seene by men.

7 Why

7 Why wilt thou see that, which thou oughtest not to have? The world passes away, and the concupiscence thereof. Our sensuall desires drawe us to roave abroad: but when the houre is past, what doest thou carry home, but a burthened conscience, and a distracted minde? A joyfull going abroad causes often a sorrowfull returne home: and a merry evening, makes a sad morning. So all carnall joy hath a pleasant entrance, but in the end causes remorse, and destruction. What canst thou see elsewhere, which thou seest not here? Behold here heaven, and earth, and all the elements: for of these all things are made.

8 What canst thou see any where under the Sunne, that can continue long? Thou thinkest perhaps to be satiated, but thou canst not

1 Eccl. 1.

not attaine to it.[a] If thou shouldest see all things present, what were it but a vaine vision? [b] Lift up thine eyes to God on high, and aske pardon for thy sinnes, and negligences. Leave vaine things to the vaine; and doe thou attend to those things, which God hath commanded thee. Shut the doore upon thee, and call unto thee *Iesus*, thy beloved. Remaine with him in thy cell; for thou shalt not finde so great peace any where else. Hadst thou not gone abroad, nor hearkened to idle rumours, thou hadst continued better in quiet peace. But by thy delighting sometimes to heare novelties, thou must needes suffer trouble of minde.

a Eccl. 3 b Psal. 122.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

Of Compunction of heart.

1. IF thou wilt proffit any thing, keepe thy selfe in the feare of God, and be not too free; but awe all thy senses, with the curbe of discipline, and give not thy selfe to foolish mirth. Give thy selfe to compunction of heart, and thou shalt finde devotion. Compunction gaines much good, which dissolutenesse is wont soone to destroy. It is wonderfull, that a man, who weighs and considers his banishment, and so many dangers of his soule, can heartily rejoyce at any time in this life.

2 Through levity of heart, and neglect of our defects, we feele not the sorrowes of our soule, but many times vainely laugh, when we have just cause to weepe. There is no

a Prov. 14.

no true liberty, nor good mirth, but in the feare of God with a good conscience. Happy is he, who can cast away all occasion of distraction, and recollect himselfe to the union of holy compunction. Happy is he, who can shake of from himselfe all that may defile, or burthen his conscience. Fight manfully; one custome overcomes another. If thou canst forbeare to intermeddle with other men, they will not hinder thee in that which thou hast to doe.

3 *Busy not thy selfe with other mens matters, nor intangle thy selfe with the affaires of thy betters. Have still in the first place an eye to thy selfe, and especially admonish thy selfe before any whom thou lovest best. If thou hast not the favour of men, be not therefore greived: but take this to heart, that

that thou doeſt not carry thy ſelfe ſo well, and circumſpectly, as becomes a ſervant of God, and a devout religious man to converſe. [a] It is oftentimes better, and more ſecure for a man, not to have many conſolations in this life, eſpecially ſuch as are according to the fleſh. But that we have not divine comforts, we are in fault our ſelves; becauſe we labour not for compunction of heart, nor doe caſt of vaine and exteriour comforts.

4 Acknowledge thy ſelfe unworthy of divine conſolation, and rather deſerving great tribulation. [b] When a man is perfectly compunct, then all the world is bitter and troubleſome to him. [c] A good man findes alwayes ſufficient cauſe of mourning and weeping: for whither he conſider himſelfe, or weigh the ſtate of his neighbour,

a Pſal. 76. b Iud. 2. and 20. c 2. Kings 13.

he perceives that none lives here without tribulation. And the more throughly he considers himselfe, the more he greives. Our sinnes and vices, wherein we are so plunged, that we can seldome contemplate heavenly things, doe administer unto us matter of just sorrow, and interiour compunction.

5 [a]If thou dideſt more frequently thinke of thy death, then of long life, no doubt but thou wouldeſt be more carefull to amend thy selfe. [b]Dideſt thou also cordially consider the future paines of hell, and purgatory, I beleeve thou wouldeſt willingly endure any labour and paine, and not feare any kinde of austerity. But because these things pierce not the heart, and we still love what delights, therefore we remaine cold, and very sloathfull.

a Eccli. 7. b Matth. 25.

6 It is oftentimes want of spir
that makes the miserable body
quickly complaine. Pray therefo
humbly to our Lord, that he m
give thee the spirit of compu
ction: and say with the Prophe
*Feede me, ô Lord, with the bread
teares, and give me to drinke wi
teares in measure.*
a Psal. 79.

Chap. XXII.

Of the consideration of humane misery.

1 MIserable art thou where
ever thou art, and whithe
soever thou turnest thy selfe, u
lesse thou turne thy selfe to Go
Why art thou troubled, because
succeedes not with thee as tho
wouldest and desirest? Who is h
that hath all things according t
his will? Neither I, nor thou, no
an

any man upon earth. a No man living in this world is without some tribulation, or affliction, be he King or Pope. Who is he who is best at ease? he surely who for God can suffer affliction.

Many weake and fraile men say: Behold how well such an one lives, how rich, how great, how powerfull, how mighty is he! But lift up thine eyes to heavenly riches, and thou shalt perceive, all these temporall things to be nothing, but very uncertaine, and very burthensome: since they are never possest without care and feare. The felicity of man consists not in having abundance of temporall things, but a meane sufficeth him. Truly it is a misery to live on earth. The more a man desires to be spirituall, the more bitter is this present life unto him, because he

a Eccl. 6. b Luk. 12. c Rom. 8. Joh. 15. Psal.

perceives better, and sees more clearly the defects of humane corruption. For to eate, drinke, watch, sleepe, rest, labour, and to be subject to all other necessities of nature, is truly a great misery, and an affliction to a devout man, who would willingly be freed, and delivered from all sinne.

3 For the inward man is very much oppressed with corporall necessities in this world. Whereupon the Prophet devoutly prayes, that he might be freed from these necessities, saying: *Deliver me, Lord, from my necessities.* But woe be to them, who knowe not their misery: and more woe to them, who love this miserable and corruptible life. For some there be who embrace it so closely (though with labouring and begging, they scarce get necessaries) that if they

could live here alwayes, would not care at all for the Kingdome of God.

4 O senseleſſe people, and infidells in heart, who lye buried ſo deepe in the earth, that they underſtand nothing but carnal things! But miſerable that they are; in the end they ſhall feele to their coſt, how vile and nothing that was, which they loved. a Whereas the Saints of God, and all the devout freinds of Chriſt, looked not on thoſe things, b which pleaſed the fleſh, and flouriſhed for a time: but with all their hope, and intention panted after eternal bleſſings. Their whole deſire aſpired upwards to things everlaſting and inviſible, that the love of viſible things might not drawe them downwards to things here belowe. c O brother looſe not thy confidence of going

a 2. Pet. 1. b Heb. 11. c Rom. 13. Heb. 12.

forwards in spirituality; there is yet time, the houre is not yet past.

5 Why wilt thou differre thy resolution from day to day? Arise, beginne this very instant, and say: Now is the time to doe, now is the time to fight, now is a fit time to amend. When thou art ill at ease, and much troubled, then is the time to merit. [a] Thou must passe through fire and water before thou canst come to refreshment. Unlesse thou use violence to thy selfe, thou shalt not overcome vice. As long as we carry about with us this fraile body, [b] we cannot be without sinne, nor live without teadiousnesse, and greife. We would faine be quiet and freed from all misery; [c] but because through sinne we have lost innocence, we thereby have lost true happinesse: therefore it behoves us

a Psal. 56. b Rom. 7. c Gen. 3. 2. Cor. 5.

us to have patience, and to expect the mercy of God, till this iniquity passe away, and mortality be swallowed up by life.

6 O how great is humane frailty, which is alwayes inclined to evil! [a] To day thou confessest thy sinnes, and to morrowe thou doest againe commit them. [b] Thou now resolvest to take heede, and within an houre after thou doest as if thou hadst made no resolution at all. We may therefore with reason humble our selves, and never have any great conceipt of our selves; since we are so fraile and unstable. That may also be soone lost by negligence, which with much labour was hardly gained at last by grace.

7 What will become of us in the end, who so timely beginne to growe cold? Woe be to us, if we

a Gen. 6. and 8. b 2. Macab. 9.

thus decline to [illegible], as if it were peace and security; whereas there does not as yet appeare the beginning of true sanctity in our conversation. We have great neede, like good Novices, to be newly instructed againe to good manners: if perhaps there might be hope of some future amendment, and greater spirituall progresse.

Chap. XXIII.

Of the meditation of death.

1 Death will soone come upon thee, a looke therefore what condition thou art in To day a man, to morrowe none. And out of sight, out of minde. O stupidity and hardnesse of mans heart, who thinkes onely of the present, and does not provide for the future. b Thou shouldest so order thy selfe in all thy thoughts, and actions, as if

a Iob 9 and 44. Also Luk. 12 and Heb. 9. b Matth. 25.

if thou wert this day or presently to depart this life. [a] If thou hadest good conscience, thou wouldest not much feare death, [b] It is better to avoyde sinne, then to fly death. If thou beest not prepared to day, how wilt thou be to morrowe? To morrowe is uncertaine: and whither thou shalt live to see it, or no, thou knowest not.

2 What availes it to live long, since we amend so little? Ah, long life does not alwayes amend us, but often increases our fault. Would to God we had spent one day well in this world. Many reckon the yeares of their conversion, but the fruit of amendment is often but small. If it be dreadfull to dye, it will perhaps be more dangerous to live longer. [c] Blessed is he, who hath alwayes the houre of death before his eyes, and dispo-

[a] Luk. 12. [b] Wisd. 4. [c] Matth. 24. and 25. [d] Eccl. 7.

ſes himſelfe dayly to dye. If at any time thou haſt ſeene a man dye, conſider that thou ſhalt paſſe the ſame way.

3 When it is morning, conceive thou ſhalt not live till night. And when night comes, do not dare to promiſe thy ſelfe the next morning. Be thou therefore alwayes prepared, and live ſo, that death may never come upon thee unawares. Many dye ſuddenly, and when they little thinke of it: [a] for in the houre, we leaſt imagine, the Sonne of man ſhall come. When that laſt houre ſhall come, thou wilt beginne to have another conceipt of thy whole life paſt: and be exceeding ſorry, that thou haſt beene ſo remiſſe and negligent.

4 [b] How wiſe, and happy is he, who indeavours to be now ſuch in his life, as he wiſhes to be found

[a] Matth. 24. Luk. 21. [b] Eccl. 9.

found at his death! For the perfect contempt of the world, fervent desire to proffit in vertue, love of discipline, labour of pennance, promptnesse of obedience, forsaking our selves, and bearing patiently all adversity for the love of Jesus Christ, will give great confidence of a happy death. Many good things thou mayest doe, whilest thou art well: but when thou art sicke, I kowe not what thou canst doe. Few are amended by sicknesse: and in like manner those who travaile much abroad, are rarely sanctified

5 [a] Trust not in thy freinds and neighbours, neither doe thou differre to future times thy soules health: for men will sooner forgett thee, then thou doest imagine. [b] It is better now in time to provide, and doe some good beforehand,

a Esay. 30. and 31. Also Ier. 17. v. 48. b Math. 6.

hand, then to rely on the help of others. If thou beest not sollicitous for thy selfe now; who will be sollicitous for thee when thou art gone? Time now is very pretious. But alas, that thou doest not spend it more profitably, by which thou mightest merit hereafter to live for ever. The time will come, when thou shalt desire one day or houre to amend in: and I knowe not, whether it will be granted thee.

6 O most dearly beloved, from how great danger mayest thou deliver thy selfe: and from how great feare free thy selfe, if thou wouldest now be alwayes fearfull, and expecting death. Endeavour now so to live, that in the houre of death thou mayest rather rejoyce then feare. 2 Learne now to dye to the world, that thou mayest then beginne

ginne to live with Christ. [a] Learne now to despise all things, that thou mayest then freely goe to Christ. [b] Chastise thy body now by penance, that thou mayest then have assured confidence.

7 [c] Ah foole! why doest thou thinke to live long, since here thou hast not one day secure? How many are deceived, and unexpectedly snatched out of this body? How often hast thou heard related, that such a one was slaine with a sword, an other drowned; an other falling from on high, broke his necke; this man with eating was choaked; that man in playing gott his end: an other by fire, an other by a weapon, an other by plague, an other murthered by theeves. Thus is death the end of all, and the life of man passes as a shaddow.

8 [d] Who will remember thee, when

a Psal. 24. b 1 Cor. 9. c Luc. 12. d Job 14.

when thou art dead? or who w
pray for thee? Doe, doe now m
dearly beloved, whatsoever th
canst doe; for thou knowest n
when thou shalt dye, and art ign
rant also what shall befall thee a
ter death. [a] Whilest thou hast tim
heape up into thy selfe everlastin
treasures. Thinke of nothing b
thy salvation: attend onely to wha
belongs to God. Make now th
selfe freinds, by honouring th
Saints of God, and imitating the
lives; *that when thou failest in thi
life, they may receive thee into th
eternall habitations.*

[b] Keepe thy selfe as a pilgrime
and stranger upon earth: to whom
the affaires of the world doe no-
thing belong. [c] Keepe thy heart
free, and elevated to God; for thou
hast not here a permanent city.
Send thither thy prayers, and day-
ly

a Matth. 6. Luk. 12. and Col. 3. b Luk. 16. Heb. 11. 1 Pet. 2. c Heb. 13.

ly sighs with teares, that thy soule may deserve happily after death to passe to our Lord Amen.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of judgement, and punishments of sinnes.

[a] IN all things consider thy end, and how thou shalt stand before a severe Judge, to whom nothing is hidden, who is not appeased with gifts, nor admits excuses: but will judge according to justice. [b] O most miserable and foolish sinner, what wilt thou answere to God, who knowes all thy wickednesses; who sometimes feares the very looke of an angry man? Why doest thou not provide for thy selfe against the day of judgement, when none shall be excused, or defended by another; but every one shall be a sufficient burthen to him-

a Heb. 12. b Iob 9. Luke 16.

himselfe? [a] Now thy labour is profitable, thy teares acceptable, thy groanes to be heard, thy sorrow satisfactory and purgative.

2 A patient man hath a great and wholesome Purgatory, who receiving injuries, [b] greives more for others malice, then for his own wrong: [c] who prayes willingly for his adversaries, and from his heart forgives offences: who delayes not to aske forgivenesse: who is sooner moved to compassion, then anger: who often uses violence to himselfe, and labours with his whole force to subdue the flesh in all things to the spirit. It is better now to purge sinne, and cutt downe vice, then to reserve them for future punishment. We truly deceive our selves through the inordinate love, which we beare to our flesh,

3 Whi-

[a] 2 Cor. 8. [b] Iam. 1. [c] Luk 23. and Act 7.

3 What other thing shall that fire devoure, but thy sinnes? The more thou now sparest thy selfe, and followest the flesh, the more greivously shalt thou pay for it hereafter, and a greater fewell shall be added to the flame. In what sinnes a man hath sinned, in those shall he be more greivously punished. There shall the sloathfull be pricked forwards with burning goades, and the gluttonous tormented with extreame hunger and thirst. There the luxurious, and lovers of pleasures, shall be covered with burning pitch, and stinking brimstone. And the envious, like mad dogges, shall howle for greife.

4 There shall be no vice which shall not have a peculiar and proper punishment. There the proud shall be replenished with confusion, and the covetous punished with a miserable penury. There one hour

[a] houre shall be more greivous in paine, then here a hundred yeares of most sharpe pennance. There is no rest, no comfort for the damned: but here there is sometimes intermission of labour, and we enjoy the comfort of our freinds. [b] Be now follicitous, and sorrowfull for thy sinnes, that in the day of judgement thou mayest be secure with the blessed. For then shall the just stand with great constancy against those that afflicted and oppressed them. Then shall he stand to judge, who now humbly submits himselfe to the judgement of men. Then shall the poore and humble have great confidence, and the proud feare on every side.

5 Then will it appeare that he was wise in this world, who had learned for Christs sake to be a foole, and despised. Then shall all tribu-

[a] Iob 4. v. 21. [b] Wisd. 5.

tribulation patiently suffered delight, and all iniquity stopp her mouth. Then shall the devout rejoyce, and the prophane mourne. Then shall mortified flesh more exult, then if it had beene alwayes nourished in delight. Then shall the poore garment shine, and the pretious robe become sullied. Then shall the poore cottage be more commended, then the rich pallace. Then shall constant patience more availe us, then all the power of the world. Then will simple obedience be preferred before all secular craft. Then shall a good and pure conscience cause more joy, then learned philosophy. Then shall the contempt of riches weigh more, then all worldly treasures. Then wilt thou be more comforted that thou hast prayed devoutly, then

a Psal. 106. c 2. Cor. 4. c Esay. 25.

that thou hast fared daintily. Then wilt thou rejoyce more that thou hast observed silence, then talked much. Then will thy holy workes be of greater value, then many faire words. Then will a strict life, and hard pennance, be more pleasing, then all earthly delights. Learne now to suffer a little, that thou mayest then be delivered from more grievous paines. Proove first here what thou art able to doe hereafter. If thou canst now indure so little, how wilt thou be able to suffer eternall torments? If now so little suffering make thee so impatient, what will hell fire doe hereafter? Loe truly thou canst not have two paradises; to delight here in this world, and afterwards to raigne with Christ.

If thou hadst lived alwayes to this day in honours, and pleasures,

what

a Luke 21.

what would it all availe thee, if it happen that thou shouldest now instantly dye? [a] All is vanity therefore, but to love God, and serve him onely. [b] For whosoever loves God with his whole heart, is not afraid of death, or punishment, or judgement, or hell: since perfect love gives secure accesse to God. But no marvell if he, whom sinne yet delight, doe feare both death, and judgement. Yet it is good, that if love cannot reclaime thee from sinne, at least the feare of hell may restraine thee. But he, who layes aside the feare of God, cannot continue long in good state, but will quickly fall into the snares of the devill.

a Eccli. 1. b Rom. 8.

Chap. XXV.

Of the fervent amendment of our whole life.

1. BE thou watchfull and diligent in the service of God, and often consider with thy selfe, to what end thou camest, and why thou didest leave the world. Was it not that thou mightest live to God, and become a spirituall man? [b] Be fervent therefore to profit, or [c] thou shalt shortly receive the reward of thy labours, and then there shall be no more feare, or greife in thy coasts. [d] Thou shalt labour now here a while, and thou shalt reape great rest, yea perpetuall joy. [e] If thou doest continue faithfull, and fervent in working, God without doubt will be faithfull, and bountifull in rewarding. Thou must have good hope of getting

a 2. Tim. 4. b Matth. 5. c Apoc. 22. and 2. d Eccl. 34. Apoc. 14. and 21. e Matth. 25.

getting the victory: but must not be in security of it, least thou waxe negligent, or growe proud.

2 When a certaine man being anxious, and often wavering betweene feare and hope, on a time oppressed with greife, had prostrated himselfe in prayer in the Church before an Altar, he revolved this in his minde, saying: O if I knewe, that I should yet persevere. And he presently heard the divine answere: What, if thou didest knowe it; what wouldest thou doe? Doe now, what thou wouldest then doe, and thou shalt be happily secure. And presently comforted, and strengthened, he committed himselfe to the divine will; and the anxious wavering ceased. [a]And he had no minde curiously to search further, what might befall him; but rather studied to ris-

a Rom 12.

cerne the acceptable and perfect will of God, for the beginning, and perfecting every good worke.

3 *Hope in our Lord, and doe good* (saith the Prophet) *and inhabite the land, and thou shalt be fedd with the riches thereof.* One thing there is, which deterreth many from progresse in vertue, and fervent amendment, the horrour of difficulty, or labour of the combatt. But they truly above others profit most in vertue, who most stoutly indeavour to overcome those things, which are more greivous, and contrary to them. For there a man proffits more, and merits greater grace, where he most overcomes himselfe, and mortifies himselfe in spirit.

4 But all men have not alike to overcome and mortifie. Yet a diligent emulatour will be able to

profit

a Psal. 36.

profit more, though he have more passions to overcome, then another lesse passionate, but lesse fervent to vertue. Two things especially conduce to great amendment, to witt, to withdrawe our selves violently from that to which nature is viciously inclined: and to labour fervently for that good, we have most neede of. Endeavour also to avoyde and overcome those things most, which doe most often displease thee in others.

5 Make thy proffit on all occasions: so as if thou doest heare, or see any good examples, thou stirre up thy selfe to imitation. 6 But if thou doest perceive any thing reprehensible, take heed thou committ not the same; or if thou at any time hast done it, labour forthwith to amend it. 7 As thine eye obser-

a Matth. 7. b Ephes. 5. v. 1.

observes others, so art thou also noted againe by others. a O how sweete and pleasant a thing it is, to see fervent and devout brethren, well mannered, and disciplined! How grievous, and pitifull, to see disorderly livers: who practise not the things, to which they are called! How hurtfull it is, to neglect the purpose of our vocation, and busy our selves in things not belonging to us?

6 Be mindefull of the resolution thou hast made, and putt before thine eyes the image of the Crucifix. Thou mayest well be ashamed, beholding the life of Jesus Christ, seeing thou hast not yet endeavoured more earnestly to conforme thy selfe unto him, though thou hast beene a long time in the way of God. A religious man, who exercises himselfe seriously, and devoutly

a 2 Cor. 12 b Eccl 3.

youtly in the most holy life and Passion of our Lord, shall there abundantly finde whatsoever is necessary and profitable for him: neither needs he seeke for any thing beter out of Jesus. O if Jesus crucified did but come into our hearts, how soone sufficiently learned should we be!

A fervent religious man, takes and beares all things well, which are commanded him. A cold and negligent religious, hath tribulation upon tribulation, and is on all sides afflicted, because he wants interiour comfort, and is forbidden to seeke any without. A religious not living in discipline, is in great danger of ruine. Whosoever seekes for liberty and ease, shall ever live in disquiet: for one thing, or another, will alwayes displease him.

How doe so many other religious,

a Gal. 5. 6.

gious, who live under the strict rule of clauſtrall diſcipline? They ſeldome goe abroad, live retiredly, feede very meanly, are courſly cloathed, labour much, ſpeake little, watch long, riſe early, ſpend much time in prayer, read often, and keepe themſelves in all kinde of diſcipline. Conſider the Carthuſians, and Ciſtercians, and the Monkes, and Nunnes of divers Orders, how they riſe every night to ſing praiſes to God. And therefore it would be very unſeemely, that thou ſhouldeſt be ſloathfull in ſo holy a worke, where ſo great a multitude of religious beginne to praiſe God in all gladneſſe of heart.

9 O that we had nothing elſe to do, but with our whole heart and mouth to praiſe our Lord God! O that thou dideſt never neede to eate, or drinke, or ſleepe, but could deſt alwayes praiſe God, and employ

thy

hy ſelfe onely in ſpirituall exer-
ciſes! Thou ſhouldeſt then be
much more happy then now, whi-
leſt through ſuch like neceſſities
thou ſerveſt the body. Would to
God theſe neceſſities were not at
all, but onely the ſpirituall refe-
ctions of the ſoule, which (alas) we
taſt of too ſeldome.

10 When a man comes to this
point, that he ſeekes his comfort
from no creature, then does he be-
ginne firſt to reliſh God perfectly,
then will he alſo be well content
with all events. Then will he nei-
ther rejoyce in great matters, nor
be ſorrowfull for ſmall: but wholy
and confidently committ himſelfe
to God, who is unto him All in
All: to whom likewiſe nothing pe-
riſhes, nor dyes, but all things doe
live unto him, and ſerve him at a
becke without delay.

11 Be

a Rom. 11. and 1. Cor. 8. 12. and 15.

11 a Be alwayes mindefull of thy end, and how lost time never returnes. Without care and diligence thou shalt never gaine vertues. If thou beginne to waxe cold, it will goe ill with thee: but if thou give thy selfe to fervour, thou shalt finde great peace, and feele lesse labour through the grace of God and love of vertue. A fervent and diliget man is ready for all things. It is a harder taske to resist vices and passions, then to toile in corporall labours. He that shunnes not small faults, by little and little falls into greater. Thou wilt alwayes b rejoyce in the evening if thou spend the day proffitably. Be watchfull over thy selfe, stirre up thy selfe, admonish thy selfe; & c whatsoever becomes of others, neglect not thy selfe. The greater violēce thou usest against thy self, the more thou shalt proffit. *Amen.*

a Eccl. 7. Apoc. 3. b Eccl. 29. c Matth. 11.

The

THE II. BOOK OF THE IMITATION OF CHRIST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Of internall conversation.

THe Kingdome of God is within you, a saith our Lord. Turne thy selfe with thy whole heart unto the Lord, and forsake this miserable world, and thy soule shall finde rest. Learne to despise exteriour things, and give thy selfe to the interiour, and thou shalt perceive the Kingdome of God to come into thee. b For the Kingdome of God is peace, and

a Luke 17. Iohn 14. b Rom. 14.

joy in the holy Ghost, which
not given to the wicked. Chr
will come unto thee, shewing
thee his comfort, if thou prep
for him a worthy mansion with
thee. a All his glory and beauty
within, and there he pleases him
selfe. He often visits the inter
man, and hath with him pleasi
discourses, delightfull consol
tions, much peace, and much
be admired familiarity.

2 Goe too faithfull soule, prep
re thy heart for this Spouse: th
he may vouchsafe to come un
thee, and dwell in thee. For so h
saith: b *If any one love me, he wi
keepe my word, and we will come
him, and make our abode with hi*
Give place to Christ therefore, an
deny entrance to all others. Wh
thou hast Christ, thou art rich, an
he will suffice thee. He will b

a Psal. 44. b Iohn 14.

thy provider, and faithfull assistant in all things, so that thou needest not trust to men: for men are quickly changed, and decay suddenly: but Christ remaines for ever, and stands firmely to the end.

3. There is no great trust to be put in a fraile and mortall man, though he be advantagious, and deare unto thee: neither must thou be sad, if he sometimes crosse and contradict thee. Those who to day are with thee, to morrow may be against thee: so on the contrary side, they often change like the winde. b Put all thy trust in God, and let him be thy love, and feare. He will answere for thee, and doe all that is best. Thou hast not here a permanent citty, and wheresoever thou art, thou art a stranger, and pilgrime: nor shalt thou ever

a Ier. 17. b 1. Pet. 5. c Heb. 13. Phil. 3.

ve rest, unlesse thou be intimely united to Christ.

4 [a] Why doest thou gaze about here, since this is not the place of thy rest? In Heaven must be thy dwelling, and all earthly things are to be regarded as in a passage. [b] All things passe away, and thou together with them. Beware thou cleave not to them, least thou be intralled, & perish. Let thy thought be upon the most high, and thy prayer directed to Christ without intermission. If thou canst not contemplate high and heavenly things, rest in the Passion of Christ; and dwell willingly in his holy wounds. For if thou fly devoutly to the wounds and pretious markes of Jesus, thou shalt feele great comfort in tribulation: neither wilt thou much care for the contempts of men, and wilt easily beare the words

[a] Phil. 3. [b] Wisd. 5.

wordes of slanderous toungs.

Christ also was despised in the world by men, and in great necessity, [a] and forsaken by his acquaintance, and freinds, in the midst of slaunders. [b] Christ would suffer, and be despised; and darest thou complaine of any one? Christ had adversaries, and backbiters; and wouldest thou have all men freinds, and benefactours? How shall thy patience be crowned, if no adversity happen? How wilt thou be the freind of Christ, if thou wilt suffer no contrary thing? Suffer with Christ, and for Christ, if thou wilt raigne with Christ.

If thou hadst once perfectly entred into the interiour of Jesus, and felt a little of his burning love, then wouldest thou not care at all for thy owne commodity, or discommodity; but wouldest rather

[a] Matt. 2. 28. 26. and John 15. [b] 2. Tim. 3.

rejoyce at affronts offered thee: for the love of Jesus makes a man despise himselfe. A lover of Jesus, and of truth, and a true internall man, and free from inordinate affections, can freely turne himselfe to God, and lift himselfe above himselfe in spirit, and enjoying him rest in peace.

7 He that savoures all things as they are, not as they are said, and esteemed to be, is truly wise, and rather taught by God, then men.

He who knowes how to guide himselfe from within, and makes small reckoning of outward things, seekes not for places, nor expects times for performing of devout exercises. An internall man soone recollects himselfe: because he never wholy powres himselfe out upon outward things. He is not hindered by exteriour labour, or necessary

a Esay 64.

eeſſary buſineſſe for a time; but as things fall out, ſo he frames himſelfe to them. He that is well ordered, and diſpoſed within, doth not heede the ſtrange and perverſe carriages of men. So much more is a man hindred and diſtracted, as he drawes things to himſelfe.

8 If all were right with thee, and though were throughly purged, every thing would fall out to thy good, and profit. Many things doe therefore often diſpleaſe, and trouble thee, becauſe thou art not yet perfectly dead to thy ſelfe, nor free from affection to all earthly things. Nothing ſo defiles and intangles the heart of man, as impure love to creatures. If thou refuſe exteriour comfort, thou wilt be able to contemplate heavenly things, and often interiourly rejoyce.

[1] Rom. 8.

Chap. II.

Of humble submission under the government of a Prelate.

1. REgard not much who is with thee, or who is against thee: but let this be thy business and care, [b] to procure that God may be with thee in all that thou doest, and that thou mayest keepe a good conscience; [c] and then God will sufficiently defend thee: for whom God will helpe, no mans malice can hurt. If thou canst hold thy peace, and suffer, without doubt thou shalt see that our Lord will helpe thee. He knowes the time, and manner how to deliver thee; thou must therefore resigne thy selfe unto him. It belongs to God to helpe, and free from all confusion. It doth sometimes much conduce towards the con-

a Rom. 8. b 2. Cor 4. c Psal. 27.

conservation of humility, that others knowe and reprehend our faults.

2 When a man humbles himselfe for his faults, he easily pacifies others, and soone asswages their anger against him. God protects and delivers the humble; he loves and comforts the humble; he inclines to the humble man: to the humble he imparts great grace; and after his depression, he raises him to glory. To the humble he reveales his secrets, and drawes, and invites him sweetly to himselfe. The humble man receiving contumelie, and confusion, is in great peace; because he relyes on God, not on the world. Doe not conceive thou hast profited any thing, unlesse thou esteeme thy selfe inferiour to all.

Chap. III.

Of a good peaceable man.

1. Put thy selfe first in peace, and then mayest thou pacifie others. A peaceable man does more good, then one that is very learned. A passionate man turnes good into evill, and easily beleeves the worst. A good peaceable man turnes all things to good. He that is truly in peace, is not suspicious of any: but he that is discontented and troubled, is tossed with divers suspicions; neither is he quiet in himselfe, nor suffers others to be quiet. He sayes often that which he should not; and omits that, which is more expedient for him to doe: he considers what others are bound to doe; and neglects what he is bound to doe himselfe. Have therefore in the first place a care-

a 2. Cor. 13. b Matth. 17. & 18.

a carefull zeale over thy selfe, and then thou mayest justly be zealous of thy neighbour.

2 Thou knowest well how to excuse and colour thy owne deeds; and wilt not receive the excuse of others. [a] It were more just, that thou didest accuse thy selfe, and excuse thy brother. [b] If thou wilt be borne withall, beare also with another. Loe how farre thou art yet from true charity and humility, which knowes not how to disdaine or be angry with any, but onely with himselfe. It is no great matter to converse with good and milde people: for this naturally pleases all, and every one willingly would have peace, and love those best who agree with them. But to be able to live peaceably with the harsh and perverse, or disorderly, or such as contradict us, is a great

a Gal. 6. b 1. Cor. 13.

grace, and very commendable a
a manly deede.

3 Some there be who kee
themſelves in peace, and ha
peace alſo with others. And the
are ſome, who are neither at pea
in themſelves, nor ſuffer others
be in peace: they are troubleſom
to others, but alwayes more tro
bleſome to themſelves. And ſom
there be who keepe themſelves
peace, and labour to bring othe
to peace. But all our peace in thi
miſerable life conſiſts more
humble ſuffering, then in not feel
ing adverſities. He who knowe
beſt how to ſuffer, will injoy mo
peace: ſuch a one is a conqueror
of himſelfe, and lord of the world,
a freind of Chriſt, and heire of
Heaven.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of a pure minde and simple intention.

WIth two wings man is lifted up above earthly things; to wit, with simplicity and purity. Simplicity must be in the intention, and purity in the affection. Simplicity intendes God, purity apprehends and tasts him. No good action will hinder thee, if thou be free from inordinate affection. If thou intend, and seeke no other thing but the good pleasure of God, and the profit of thy neighbour, thou shalt injoy internall liberty. If thy heart were right, then every creature would be unto thee a looking glasse of life, and a booke of holy doctrine. There is no [a] creature so small and abject, that represents not the goodnesse of God.

[a] Rom. 1.

2 If thou wert good and pure within, then wouldest thou be able to discerne, and take all things well without impediment. A pure heart penetrates heaven and hell. According as every one is interiourly, so judges he exteriourly. If there be joy in the world, a man of a pure heart surely possesses it. And if there be any where tribulation and affliction, an evill conscience must needes feele it. As iron put into the fire, looses the rust thereof, and becomes fiery glowing: so a man wholy converting himselfe to God, becomes fervent, and is changed into a new man.

3 When a man beginnes to growe cold, then is he afraid of small labours, and willingly receives outward consolations. But when he beginnes perfectly to overcome himselfe, and to walke manfully in

the

way of God, then does he esteeem those things but light, which before were heavy to him.

CHAP. V.

Of the consideration of our selves.

WE cannot much trust to our selves, because we often want grace and understanding. [a] There is but little light in us, and this we quickly loose through negligence. Oftentimes also we perceive not our inward blindnesse. We doe often evill; and which is worse, we excuse it: and we are moved sometimes with passion, and conceave it zeale. [b] We reprehend small things in others, and what is great in our selves, we passe over. [c] We quickly feele, and weigh what we suffer from others: but what others suffer from us, we minde not. Whosoever would

a Ier. 17. b Pſal. 140. c Matth. 7.

would well and duely consider his owne deedes, would finde no reason to judge hardly of another.

2 [a]An internall man preferres the care of himselfe, before all other cares. And he that lookes diligently to himselfe, easily holds his peace of others. Thou wilt never be internall and devout, unlesse thou passe over with silence other mens matters, and have a speciall eye to thy selfe. [b]If thy minde be wholy upon God, and thy selfe, thou wilt little be moved with what thou seest abroad. Where art thou, when thou art not present to thy selfe? When thou hast runne over all, what hast thou profited, neglecting thy selfe? If thou wilt (as thou oughtest) injoy true peace, and union, thou must lay all the world aside, and looke onely to thy selfe.

3 Thou

[a] Mat.7. [b] 2.Cor.4. and Gal.6.

Thou wilt therefore profit much, if thou keepe thy selfe free from all temporall care. Thou wilt faile exceedingly, if thou esteeme any temporall thing. Let nothing be high, nothing great, nothing gratefull, nothing acceptable to thee, but purely God, or what is from God. Esteeme all comfort vaine, which thou receivest from any creature. [a] A soule that loves God, despises all that is under him. God alone eternall, and immense, filling all places, is the comfort of the soule, and the true joy of the heart.

[a] Eccl. 1.

CHAP. VI.

Of the joy of a good conscience.

[a] THE glory of a good man, is the testimony of a good conscience. [b] Keepe a good conscience, and thou shalt alwayes have

[a] 2. Cor. 1. [b] Wisd. 23.

have joy. A good conscience ca
beare very much, and is very joy
full in adversities. An evill con
science is alwayes fearfull, and un
quiet. Thou shalt rest sweetely,
thy heart doe not reprehend thee
Rejoyce not, but when thou ha
done well. Sinners have never tru
joy, nor feele inward peace; [a] *be*
cause there is no peace to the impious
saith the Lord. [b] *And if they shall*
say: We are in peace, and no evi
will fall upon us; who shall dare t
hurt us? [c] Believe them not, for upo
a sudden the wrath of God shall ris
and their deedes shall be turned into
nothing, and their conceipts shall pe
rish

2 To glory in tribulation, is no
thing hard to him that loves. [d] for
to glory, is to glory in the
Crosse of our Lord. [e] That glory
is short, which is given and recei-

a Isay 48. b Luk 11. c Isay 37. d Rom 5. e Gal 6.

red from men. [a] Greife ever waites upon the glory of the world. [b] The glory of good men is in their consciences, not in the tongues of men. The gladneſſe of the juſt is from God, and in God: and their joy is of the truth. He that deſires true and everlaſting glory, cares not for temporall. And he that ſeekes temporall glory, or does not from his heart contemne it, is convinced to have but little love to heavenly glory. He hath great quiet of minde, who neither cares for praiſes, nor diſpraiſes.

3 He whoſe conſcience is pure, will eaſily be content and pacified. Thou art not more holy for being praiſed; nor worſe, if diſpraiſed. What thou art, thou art; neither oughteſt thou to be accounted greater, then what thou art in the ſight of God. [c] If thou conſider

H well

a Iob 5. b 2 Cor. 1. c 1 Kings 16.

well what thou art within, thou wilt not care what men say of thee abroad. Man beholds the face, but God sees the heart. Man considers the actions, but God weighs the intention. To doe alwayes well, and to esteeme little of thy selfe; is a signe of an humble minde. To refuse comfort from any creature, is a token of great purity, and interiour confidence.

4 It is evident, that he who seekes no outward witnesse for himselfe; hath committed himself wholy to God: *For not he who commends himself* (saith Saint Paul) *is approved; but he whom God commends.* To walke interiourly with God, and not to be possessed with any outward affection, is the state of an internall man.

2. Cor. 10.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Love of Jesus above all things.

1 BLessed is he who understands what it is to love Jesus, and to despise himselfe for Jesus. [a] One beloved thing must be left for another, because Jesus alone will be beloved above all things. The love of a creature is deceitfull, and unconstant: the Love of Jesus faithfull, and perseverant. Whosoever cleaves to a creature, shall fall with that which is subject to fall. Whosoever embraces Jesus, shall stand firmely for ever. [b] Love him, and keepe him for thy freind; who when all goes away, will not leave thee, not suffer thee to perish in the end. Thou must at last be separated from all creatures, whither thou wilt, or no.

2 Cleave fast to Jesus, living and dying:

a Psal. 118. b Deut. 6. Matth. 22.

dying: and committ thy selfe to his trust, who when all faile, can onely assist thee. Thy beloved is of that nature, that he will have no partener: will have thy heart alone, and sitt in it, like a King in his owne throne. If thou didst know well how to free thy selfe from all creatures, Jesus would willingly dwell with thee. What trust soever thou putteſt in any besides Jesus, is all no better then lost. Trust not, nor rely on a reede shaken with every puffe of winde: for all flesh is hay, and the glory thereof shall wither away as the flowre of the field.

3 Thou shalt soone be deceived, if thou regardest onely mens outward appearance. For if then thou seekest thy comfort and profit, thou shalt often loose by it. If in all thou seekest Jesus, thou shalt sure-

a Esay 40.

surely finde Jesus. But if thou seeke thy selfe, thou shalt also finde thy selfe, but to thine owne ruine. For man hurts himselfe more, by not seeking Jesus, then the whole world, and all his enemies besides.

Chap. VIII.

Of familiar freindship with Iesus.

When Jesus is present, all is well, and nothing seemes difficult: but when Jesus is absent, all is hard. When Jesus speakes not within us, our comfort is poore: but if Jesus speake but one word onely, we abound with consolation. [a] Did not Mary Magdalene presently rise from the place, where she wept, when Martha said to her: *Thy Maister is here, and calls thee?* A happy houre, when [b] Jesus calls from teares to joy of spirit. How dry and hard art

a Iohn 11. b Matth. 26.

thou without Jesus? How foolish and vaine, if thou desirest any thing out of Jesus. Is it not a greater dammage, then to loose the whole world?

2 What can the world profit thee without Jesus? [a] To be without Jesus, is a greivous hell; and to be with Jesus, is a sweete paradice. If Jesus be with thee, no enemy can hurt thee. [b] Whosoever findes Jesus, findes a good treasure; yea a good above all good. [a] And whosoever looses Jesus, looses too much, and more then the whole world. He is extreame poore, who lives without Jesus; and he exceeding rich, who is well with Jesus.

3 It is great skill, to knowe how to converse with Jesus; and great wisdome, to knowe how to conserve him. Be humble and peaceable,

[a] Rom. 8. [b] Matt. 19. Luke 2.

able, and Jesus will be with thee. Be devout and quiet, and Jesus will remaine with thee. Thou mayest soone drive Jesus away, and loose his grace, if thou decline to exteriour things. And if thou drive him from thee, and loose him, to whom wilt thou then fly, and whom wilt thou seeke for thy freind? Without a freind thou canst not well live: and if Jesus be not above all thy freind, thou wilt be too sorrowfull and desolate. Thou doest then foolishly, if thou trust and rejoyce in any other. a We must rather choose to have all the world against us, then Jesus offended with us. Of all therefore that are deare to thee, lett Jesus alone be thy speciall beloved.

4. Love all for Jesus; but Jesus for himselfe. Jesus Christ onely is spe-

a Gal. 6.

especially to be beloved: who alone above all freinds, is found to be good, and faithfull. For him, and in him, let all, as well freinds as foes, be deare to thee: [a] and these are all to be prayed for, that they all may knowe and love him. Never desire to be singularly praised, or beloved: for that appertaines to God alone, who hath none like unto himselfe. Neither doe thou desire, that the heart of any should be sett on thee: nor doe thou sett thy heart on the love of any: but lett Jesus be in thee and every good man.

5. Keepe thy heart pure, and free from captivity to any creature. Thou must be naked [b] and pure in heart in the sight of God, if thou wilt attende, and see, how sweete our Lord is. And truly thou shalt never attaine to this, except thou be

[a] Matth. 5. [b] Psal. 23.

be prevented, and drawne by his grace, that all being emptyed and dismissed, thou alone mayest be united to him alone. For when the grace of God comes unto man, then is he powerfull for all things: and when it retires, then will he be poore, and weake, left as it were onely to stripes. When this happens, thou must not be dejected, nor despaire; but resigne thy selfe to the will of God with indifferency, and suffer all that shall befall thee for the glory of Jesus Christ: for after winter follows summer, and the night passed, the day returnes; and after a tempest faire weather appeares.

CHAP. IX.

Of the want of all comfort.

IT is not hard to despise humane comfort, when we have di-

vine. But it is much, and ver
much, to be able to want all co
solation, both divine, and humane
and to be willing for Gods honou
to endure desolation of heart: an
to seeke himselfe in nothing, nor t
regard his owne desert. What grea
matter is it, if thou be cheereful
and devout at the coming of gra
ce? This houre is wished for by
all men. He rides at his ease, whom
the grace of God carryes. Wha
wonder, if he feele no burthen
who is borne up by the Almighty
and lead by the soveraigne guide.

2 We willingly receive some
kinde of comfort, and a man can
hardly shake of himselfe. The ho-
ly Martyr Saint Laurence overca-
me the world with his preist; be-
cause he despised whatsoever see-
med delightfull in the world: and
for the love of Christ, he also

meekely

meekely suffered the high preist of God Sixtus whom he very much loved, to be taken from him. He overcame therefore the love of the creature, through the love of his Creatour: and chose rather the divine pleasure, then humane comfort. Doe thou also learne so to forsake some necessary thing, and a beloved freind for the love of God. Doe not take it greivously, when thou art forsaken by a freind, knowing that at length we shall all be separated from one another.

A man must fight long, and much in himselfe, before he can learne fully to overcome himselfe, and draw all his affections wholy unto God. When a man trusts in himselfe, he easily slides into humane comforts. But a true lover of Christ, and a diligent pursuer of vertue, gives not himselfe to such solaces, nor seekes such sensible

sweet-

ſweetneſſes; but rather ſtrong exe-
ciſes, and to ſuſtaine hard labour
for Chriſt.

4 When ſpirituall comfort the-
refore is given from God, receive
with thankfulneſſe; and knowe
is the guift of God, not thy merit.
Be not puffed up, joy not too
much, nor preſume vainely: but
be thou more humble for the gra-
ce received, and more wary, and
fearfull in all thy actions; for the
houre will paſſe away, and tempta-
tion will ſucceede. When conſo-
lation is taken from thee, diſpair
not preſently: but with humility,
and patience, expect the heavenly
viſitation; for God is able to re-
turne thee greater grace and com-
fort. This is not new, nor ſtrange
to them who have experience in
the way of God: for in great Saints,
and ancient Prophets, there were
now and then ſuch kinde of alter-
nations.

5 Whe-

Whereupon one (then repleniſhed with grace) ſaid: [a] *In my aboundance, I will not be moved for ever.* But when grace was retired, he added what he found in himſelfe, ſaying: *Thou turnedſt thy face from me, and I became troubled.* Notwithſtanding he does not diſpaire in the midſt of theſe changes, but more earneſtly prayes to God, ſaying: *Vnto thee, ô Lord, will I cry, and I will pray unto my God.* Laſtly he receives the fruite of his prayer, and witneſſes that he was heard, ſaying: [b] *The Lord hath heard me, and taken pity upon me: the Lord is become my helper.* But wherein? *Thou haſt turned* (ſayes he) *my ſorrow into joy, and thou haſt environned me with gladneſſe.* And if great Saints have beene thus dealt withall, we, who are poore and weake, ought not to diſpaire, though we be

a Pſal 29. b In the ſame place.

be sometimes fervent, and some-
times cold; [a] for the spirit co-
and goes according to his go-
pleasure. Whereupon blessed Jo-
sayes: [b] *Thou doest visit him early i-
the morning, and suddenly doest pro-
him.*

6 Wherein then shall I hope, o-
in what shall I put my trust, but i-
the great mercy of God alone, an-
in the onely hope of heavenly gra-
ce? for whither I injoy the pre-
sence of good men, or devout bre-
thren, and faithfull freinds, or hol-
bookes, or learned treatises, o-
sweete songs and hymnes; all thes-
helpe little, and savour little, [c] when
I am forsaken by grace, and left in
my owne poverty. At such a time
there is no better remedy, then pa-
tience, and resigning of my selfe to
the will of God.

7 I never found any man so reli-
gious,

a Iohn 3. b Iob 7. c Iuke 8.

gious, who hath not sometimes
has a withdrawing of grace, or
felt not some decrease of fervour.
There was never Saint so highly
rapt, and illuminated, who was not
tempted first or last. For he is not
worthy of the high contemplation
of God, who for God hath not
been exercised with some tribu-
lation: for temptation going be-
fore, is wont to be a signe of en-
suing comfort. Since unto those
who are proved by temptation,
heavenly comfort is promised.
Who shall overcome, sayes he, *I
will give him to eate of the tree of
life.*

Moreover divine comfort is gi-
ven, to make a man stronger to
beare adversities. And temptations
follow, least he should growe
proud of that grace. [b] The devill
sleepes not, neither is our flesh as
yet

[a] Apoc. 3. [b] 2. Pet. 3.

yet dead: ceaſe not therefore t
prepare thy ſelfe for the battle, ſo
on the right hand, and on the left
are enemies, that never reſt.

Chap. X.

Of gratitude for the grace of God

1 WHy ſeekes thou reſt, ſinc
thou art borne to labour
a Diſpoſe thy ſelfe to patience, r
ther then to conſolation: and t
bearing of the croſſe, rather the
joy. What ſecular perſon is ther
that would not willingly receiv
comfort, and ſpirituall joy, if h
could alwayes obtaine it? For ſpi
rituall comforts excell all the de
lights of the world, and pleaſure
of the fleſh. For all worldly de
lights are either vaine, or uncleane
but ſpirituall delights, are onel
pleaſant, and honeſt, produced b
vertue, and infuſed by God int
pur

a Iob 7. Luke 14.

pure mindes. No man notwithstanding can alwayes injoy these divine consolations at his owne pleasure; by reason that the time of temptation does not long cease.

2. False liberty of minde, and great confidence in our selves, are very opposite to the heavenly visitation. God does well in giving the grace of comfort; but man does ill, in not returning it againe wholy to God with thankes-giving. And this is the reason why the gifts of grace cannot flowe in us, because we are ungratefull to the giver; and returne them not wholy to the head fountaine. For grace is ever due to him who is worthily thankfull: and that shall be taken from the proud, which is wont to be given to the humble.

3. I desire not that consolation,

a Eccli. 2.

which bereaves me of compunction: nor doe I affect that contemplation, which leades to haughtineſſe of minde. For all that which is high, is not holy; nor every deſire, pure; nor all that is ſweete, good; neither is every thing that is deare to us, gratefull to God. I doe willingly accept that grace, whereby I may become more humble, and fearfull, and better diſpoſed to forſake my ſelfe. He who is taught by the gift of grace, and inſtructed with the ſcourge of the ſubſtraction thereof, will not dare to attribute any good to himſelfe: but will rather confeſſe himſelfe poore, and naked. [a] Give unto God what is his; and aſcribe that which is thine: that is, give God thankes for his grace; and conceive, that ſinne onely, and the puniſhment due to it, is that which belongs to thee.

a Math. 22.

4 But

4 Put thy selfe alwayes in the lowest place, and the highest shall be given thee; for the highest stands not without the lowest. The greatest Saints in the sight of God are the least in their owne opinions. And the more glorious they be, the more humble are they in themselves. Being full of truth, and heavenly glory, they are not desirous of vaine glory. Being setled, and grounded in God, they can in no sort be proud And they who ascribe all unto God, what good soever they have received, seeke not glory one of another, but would have that glory, which is from God alone, and desire above all to praise God in himselfe, and all the Saints, and alwayes tend unto the same.

5 Be gratefull therefore for the least, and thou shalt be made worthy

thy to receive greater. Let the least be unto thee even as the greatest, and the most contemptible as a speciall gift. If thou consider the worth of the giver, no gift will seeme little, or of meane esteeme. For that is not little, which is given by the greatest God. Yea though he give punishment, and stripes, yet should it be gratefull to thee; for whatsoever he permitts to happen to us, is alwayes for our salvation. He then who desires to keepe the grace of God, let him be thankfull for grace that is given, and patient when it is taken away. Let him pray, that it may returne, and be wary and humble, least he loose it.

Chap. XI.

Of the few lovers of the Crosse of Jesus.

1 JEsus hath now many lovers of his heavenly glory; but few bearers

bearers of his Crosse. He hath many desirous of comfort, but few of tribulation. He findes many companions of his table, but few of his abstinence. All desire to rejoyce with Christ, but few are willing to suffer for him. Many followe Jesus to the breaking of bread: but few to the drinking the cupp of his Passion Many reverence his miracles, but few followe the ignominy of the Crosse. Many love Jesus, whilest they feele no adversities. Many praise, and blesse him, as long as they receive comfort from him. If Jesus hide himselfe, and leave them but a while; they either fall into murmuration, or into too much dejection.

But they who love Jesus for Jesus, and not for their owne comfort, blesse him in tribulation and anguish of heart, no lesse then in

a Luk. 9. 22.

the higheſt comfort. And if he ſhould never give them comfort they would notwithſtanding always praiſe him, and always give him thankes.

3 O how powerfull is the pure love of Jeſus, not mixed with ſelf love, or proper intereſt! Are they not all to be called [a] hirelings, who ever ſeeke comforts? Are not they convinced to be rather lovers of themſelves, then of Chriſt, who thinke always of their own commodity, and gaine? Where may ſuch a one be found, as will ſerve God without hope of reward?

4 It is rare to finde any one ſo ſpirituall, as to be naked from all things. For where ſhall we finde a man truly poore in ſpirit, and naked from all creatures? [b] Far from hence, and from the end of

[a] Phil. 2. [b] Prov 3.

he world is his price If a man hall have given all his wealth, et is it nothing. And if he should ave done great auſterities, as pen-ance, yet is it little. And if he hould attaine to all knowledge, et is he farre of. And if he ſhould ave obtained great vertue, and ery fervent devotion, yet is there uch wanting to him; to wit, one hing, which is the moſt neceſſary of all for him. What is that? That aving a left all, he forſake him-elfe, and wholy depart from him-elfe, and retaine no ſparke of ſelfe ove. b And when he ſhall have one all, he knowes to be done, ett him thinke he hath done no-hing.

Lett him not weigh that much, hat may be much eſteemed: but et him confeſſe in truth, that he s an unprofitable ſervant, accor-

a Matth. 16. b Luk. 17.

ding to that saying of truth: a *When you shall have done all that is commanded you, say, that you are unprofitable servants.* Then may he be truly poore, and naked in spirit, and say with the Prophet: b *Because I am all alone, and poore.* Yet no man is richer then he, no man more free, no man more powerfull, then he who knowes how to forsake himselfe, and all things else, and place himselfe in the lowest place.

a Luke 17. Psal. 24.

CHAP. XII.

Of the high way of the holy Crosse.

1 THis speach seemes hard to many: a *Deny thy selfe, take up the Crosse, and followe Iesus.* But it will be much more harsh to heare that last word: b *Goe from me ye accursed, into everlasting fire.* For they who now willingly heare, and fol-

a Matth. 19. b Matthæ.

followe the Crosse, shall not then feare the sentence of eternall damnation. [a] This signe of the Crosse shall be in heaven, when our Lord shall come to judgement. Then all the servants of the Crosse, who in their life time conformed themselves to Christ crucified, shall draw neare unto Christ their Judge with great confidence.

2. Why therefore doest thou feare to take up the Crosse, which leades to a kingdome? In the Crosse is health, in the Crosse is life, in the Crosse is protection from enemies, in the Crosse is infusion of heavenly sweetnesse, in the Crosse is strength of minde, in the Crosse is joy of spirit, in the Crosse is height of vertue, in the Crosse is perfection of sanctity. [b] There is no health of soule, nor hope of everlasting life, but in the

a Psal. xcv. b Luk. 9.

Crosse. Take up therefore thy Crosse, and followe Jesus, and thou shalt goe into everlasting life. He [a]went before carrying his owne Crosse, and dyed for thee on the Crosse; that thou mighteſt alwayes beare thy Crosse, and desire to dye on the Crosse. For if thou dyeſt with him, thou shalt live also with him. And if thou beeſt his companion in paine, thou shalt also be his companion in glory.

3 Behold in the Crosse is all, and all consists in dying, and there is no other way to life, and to true inward peace, but the way of the holy Crosse, and dayly mortification. Goe where thou wilt, seeke what thou wilt, and thou shalt not finde a higher way above, nor a securer way below, then the way of the holy Crosse. Dispose, and order all things according to thy will and

[a] Iohn 19.

and judgement, yet shalt thou ever finde that thou must suffer somewhat, either willingly, or against thy will: and so thou shalt still finde the Crosse. For either thou shalt feele paine in thy body, or sustaine in thy soule tribulation of spirit.

4 Thou shalt be something forsaken by God, sometimes provoked by thy neighbour; and which is more, thou shalt be often irkesome to thy owne selfe; neither canst thou be delivered, or eased by any remedy or comfort; but thou must undergoe it, as long as shall please God. For God will have thee learne, to suffer temptation without comfort, to submitt thy selfe wholy to him, and become more humble by tribulation. No man feeles so lively the Passion of Christ, as he who hath had occasion to suffer the like. The Crosse there-

therefore is alwayes ready, and every where attends thee. Whithersoever thou flyest, thou canst not escape it: for whersoever thou goest, thou doest carry thy selfe with thee, and shalt alwayes finde thy selfe. Turne thy selfe to things above, and below thee, without, and within thee: and in all these shalt thou still finde the Crosse: and every where of necessity thou must have patience, if thou wilt have inward peace, and deserve an everlasting crowne.

5 If thou doest beare the Crosse willingly, it will beare thee, and guide thee to thy desired end; to witt, where there shall be an end of suffering, though there be none here. If thou doest beare it unwillingly, thou makest it a burthen to thee, and increasest thy load: and yet thou must of necessity beare it. If thou doest cast away

the

the Crosse, without doubt thou shalt finde another, and that perhaps more heavy.

Thinkest thou to escape that, which no man could ever escape? What Saint was there ever in the world without his Crosse and affliction? Our Lord Jesus Christ himselfe, was not one houre of his life without suffering. *For it behoved that Christ should suffer, and rise from death, and so enter into his glory.* And how doest thou seeke another way, then this royall way, which is the way of the holy Crosse?

The whole life of Christ was Crosse, and martyrdome: and doest thou seeke rest and joy for thy selfe? Thou doest erre, thou doest erre, if thou seekest any other thing, then to suffer tribulation, for this mortall life is all full

a Luk. 24. b Iob 7.

full of misery, and signed round about with Crosses. And the greater progresse a man makes in spirit, the more heavy Crosses doe he often meete withall: because the greife of his exile growes greater through love.

3 But notwithstanding, this man so many wayes afflicted, is not without some ease of consolation because he knowes great good does accrue unto him by bearing of his Crosse. For whilest he willingly subjects himselfe to it, all the burthen of tribulation is turned into confidence of divine comfort. And the more the flesh is wasted by affliction, so much the more is the spirit strengthened by interiour consolation. And sometimes he is so much comforted with this affection to tribulation and adversity, for the love of conforming him-

a 2. Cor. 12. and 12.

himselfe to the Crosse of Christ, that he desires not to be without sorrowe and tribulation: for he beleeves himselfe to be so much more pleasing to God, as he shall be able to suffer more for him. This is not the vertue of man, but the grace of Christ: that can doe, and does so much in fraile flesh, that what it alwayes naturally abhorres, and flyes from, that through fervour of spirit it layes hold of, and loves.

9 It is not according to mans inclination to beare and love the Crosse, to chastise and subdue the body; to fly honours, willingly to indure contumelies, to despise himselfe, and wish to be despised; to suffer all adversities and detriments, and to desire no prosperity in this world. If thou dost looke upon thy selfe, thou canst not doe such things of thy selfe. But if thou doest

confide in our Lord, strength shall be given thee from heaven; and the world and the flesh shall be subject to thy power. Nor shalt thou feare thy enemy the devill, if thou beest armed with faith, and signed with the Crosse of Christ. 10 Resolve therefore like a good and faithfull servant of Christ, to beare manfully the Crosse of thy Lord, who for thy love was crucified. Prepare thy selfe to beare many adversities, and divers kinds of troubles in this miserable life; for so it will be with thee wheresoever thou art: and so surely thou wilt finde it, wheresoever thou doest hide thy selfe. It must be so with thee of necessity: and there is no meanes to avoyde tribulation and Crosses, but to beare them patiently. Drinke of the chalice of our Lord willingly, if thou doest desire to be his friend, and

have part with him. [a] Leave the desire of comforts to God: lett him doe therein, as best pleases him. [b] Sett thou thy heart upon suffering tribulations, and account them the greatest comforts; [c] for the sufferings of this life are not condigne to the meriting of future glory, which shall be revealed in us, though thou alone couldest suffer them all.

11. When thou shalt come to this passe, that tribulation becomes sweete and savoury to thee for the love of Christ, then conceive it to be well with thee, for thou hast found a paradise upon earth. As long as it is greivous to thee to suffer, and that thou seekest to avoyde it, so long shalt thou be ill at ease, and the tribulation which thou flyest from, will followe thee every where.

a Math. 20. b John 18. c Rom. 8.

12 If thou doest settle thy selfe
what thou oughtest; to witt, [illegible]
suffer, and dye to thy selfe, it wi
quickly be better with thee, an
thou shalt finde peace. Though
thou shouldest have beene rapt t
the third heaven with Saint Paul
thou art not thereby assured tha
thou shalt suffer no contradiction
1 (sayes Jesus) [b] *will shewe him, ho*
great things he must suffer for my na
me. It remaines therefore for the
to suffer, if thou doest desire to lo
ve Jesus, and perpetually to serv
him.

13 I would to God thou wer
worthy to suffer something for the
name of Jesus: [c] how great glory
would it be to thee, how great ex-
ultation to all the Saints of God,
and how great edification to thy
neighbour! for though few desire
to suffer, yet all commend patien

cc,

a 2. Cor. 11 and 12. b Acts 9. Acts 21.

te. With great reason ought est thou to be willing to suffer a little for Christ, since many suffer greater things for the world.

14 Knowe for certaine, that thou oughtest to leade a dying life. And the more every one dyes to himselfe, so much more does he beginne to live to God. No man is fitt to comprehend heavenly things, who submits not himselfe to suffer adversities for Christ. Nothing is more acceptable to God, nothing more wholesome to our selves in this world, then willingly to suffer for Christ. And if it were in thy choice, thou shouldest rather wish to suffer adversities for Christ, then to be recreated with many comforts; for by that meanes thou shouldest more resemble Christ, and be more conformable to all the Saints. For the merit and per-

a Psal. 43.

fection of our ſtate of life, conſiſts not in much ſweetneſſe and comfort; but rather in ſuffering great afflictions, and tribulations.

15 If there had beene any thing better, and more conducing to the ſalvation of man, then ſuffering, Chriſt would ſurely have ſhewed it by word or example. But he plainly exhorted all the diſciples that followed him, and all that deſired to followe him, to beare the Croſſe, ſaying: [a] *If one will come after me, lett him deny himſelfe, and take up his Croſſe, and followe me.* So that when we have read, and ſearched all, lett this be the finall concluſion: [b] *That through many tribulations we muſt enter into the Kingdom of God.*

a Luk. 9. b Act. 14.

THE

We will goe into the house of the Lord. Psal. 122. 1.

THE III. BOOK OF THE IMITATION OF CHRIST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Of the internall speech of Christ to a faithfull soule.

I *Will heare* [a] *what my Lord God will speake in me.* Blessed is that soule, that heares her Lord speaking in her, and receives from his mouth the word of comfort. [b] Blessed are those eares, that heare the faint whisperings of Gods inspirations, and listen not to the murmuring noyse of this world. [c] Blessed indeede

K 3 deede

a Psal. 84. b 1. Kings 3. c Matth. 13.

deede are thoſe eares, that hearken not to the voice which ſounds exteriourly, but to truth ſpeaking, and teaching interiourly. Bleſſed are thoſe eyes, which being ſhutt to all outward things, are open to thoſe within. Bleſſed are they, who penetrate internall things, and endeavour to prepare themſelves more and more by dayly exerciſes, to the attaining of heavenly ſecrets. Bleſſed are they, who attende wholy to God, and ſhake of from them all impediments of the world.

2 Obſerve theſe things, O my ſoule, and ſhutt up the doores of thy ſenſes: [a] that thou mayeſt heare within thee, what thy Lord God will ſay. Thus ſayes thy beloved: [b] I am thy ſalvation, thy peace, and thy life. Keepe thy ſelfe with me, and thou ſhalt finde pea-

ce.

[a] Pſal. 8. [b] Pſal. 34.

ce. Forsake all transitory things, and seeke for everlasting. What are all transitory things, but deceipts? And what will all creatures availe thee, if thou beest forsaken by thy Creatour, that thou mayest attaine to true happinesse.

CHAP. II.

That Truth speakes interiourly without noyse of wordes.

1 SPeake Lord: for thy servant heares. I am thy servant, give me understanding, that I may knowe thy testimonies. Incline my heart to the words of thy mouth; let thy speech distill as dew. The children of Israel in times past said to Moyses: a *Speake thou to us, and we will heare thee: let not our Lord speake unto us, least perhaps we dye.* Not so Lord, not so I beseech thee: but rather with the Prophet Samuel,

a 1. Kings 3. Psal. 118. b Exod. 20.

muel, I humbly and earnestly intreate: *Speake Lord, for thy servant heares.* Lett not Moyses speake unto me, nor any of the Prophets: but doe thou rather speake my Lord God, the Inspirer and Enlightener of all the Prophets: for thou alone without them canst perfectly instruct me; but they without thee can profit nothing.

2 They indeede can pronounce wordes; but give not the spirit. They speake exceeding well; but thou being silent, they inflame not the heart. They deliver the letters; but thou openest the sense. They produce mysteries; but thou discloseſt the secret meaning of them. They declare thy commandments; but thou doest helpe to fulfill them. They shew the way; but thou givest strength to walke. They worke onely exteriourly, but thou doest

doest instruct, and enlighten the heart. They water the outside; but thou giveſt fertility. They cry loud with words; but thou giveſt understanding to the hearer.

2 Let not Moyses therefore speake to me, but thou my Lord God eternall Truth; least perhaps I dye, and become fruitleſſe, if I be onely exteriourly warned, and not interiourly inflamed; and least the word being heard, and not fulfilled; knowne, and not loved; beleeved, and not observed, should serve for judgement against me. [a] Speake therefore, ô Lord, for thy servant heares. [b] For thou hast the words of life everlasting. Speake thou to me, to the comfort of my soule, and amendment of my whole life, and to thy praise, and glory, and everlasting honour.

a 1. Kings 3. b John 6.

Chap. III.

That the words of God are to be heard with humility, and that many weigh them not.

I SOnne heare my words, words that are moſt ſweete, and ſurpaſſing all the knowledge of the Philoſophers and wiſe men of this world. My words are ſpirit and life, and not to be weighed by humane underſtanding. They are not to be drawne to vaine complacence, but to be heard in ſilence, and to be received with all humility, and great affection. And I ſaid: [b] Bleſſed is the man, whom thou ſhalt inſtruct (O Lord!) and ſhalt teach him thy law, that thou mayeſt eaſe him from all evill dayes, and that he be not deſtroyed upon earth. [c] I, ſayes our Lord, have taught the Prophets from the begin-

a Matth. 6. b Pſal. 93. c Hab. 2.

beginning, and ceaſe not continually to ſpeake to every one: but many are hardened, and give not care to my ſpeech.

2 The greater number more willingly liſten to the world, then to God; and followe ſooner the deſires of the fleſh, then the will of God. The world promiſes temporall and ſmall things, and is ſerved with great diligence: I promiſe moſt high, and eternall things, and their hearts are drowſy and dull. Who is he that ſerves and obeyes me in all things, with ſo great care, as the world, and the Lords thereof are ſerved? Bluſh O Sidon, (ſayes the Sea.) And if thou doeſt aske why, heare the reaſon. For a ſmall living, a long voyage is undertaken: but for everlaſting life, many will ſcarce move a foote from the ground. A reward of ſmall worth is ſought after: for a

penny

penny there is oftentimes foul contention: for a meere triffle, and small promiſe, men feare not to toyle day and night.

3 Bnt alas, to purchaſe an unchangeable good, and ineſtimable reward, and the ſupreame honour, and eternall glory, they are loath to take the leaſt paines.

4 Bluſh therefore ſloathfull and murmuring ſervant, that they are found more induſtrious to perdition, then thou to life. They rejoyce more in vanity, then thou in truth. 5 They are truly ſometimes fruſtrated of their hopes; 6 but my promiſe deceives none, nor any truſting in me doe I ſend away empty. 7 What I have promiſed, I will performe; 8 what I have ſaid, I will make good; ſo that he remaine faithfull in my love to the end. 9 I am the rewarder of all good

a Eſay 25. b Rom. 3. c Math. 24. d Math. 24. e Apoc. 2. f Math. 25.

good men, and the strong preserver of all devout persons.

4 Write my words in thy heart, and weigh them diligently: for they will be very necessary in time of temptation. What thou understandest not, when thou readest, thou shalt knowe in the day of visitation I am wont to visit my elect two severall wayes; to wit, by temptation, and by consolation. And read every day two lessons to them: in the one reprehending their vices, in the other exhorting them to the increase of vertues. He, who hath my words, and despises them, hath one, who will judge him at the last day.

A Prayer to implore the grace of devotion.

5 O my Lord God, thou art all my good. [a] And who am I, that dare

a Genes. 18. And 19.

dare speake unto thee? [a] I am thy most poore servant, and vile worme: much poorer, and more contemptible, then I know, or dare expresse. Remember notwithstanding, ô Lord, that I am nothing, have nothing, and can doe nothing. Thou alone art good, just and holy, thou canst doe all things, performest all things, fillest all things, leaving a sinner onely void of all good. Remember thy mercies, ô Lord, and fill my heart with thy grace, who wilt not have thy workes be in vaine.

6 How can I support my selfe in this miserable life, unlesse thy mercy and grace comfort me? [b] Turne not thy face from me: delay not thy visitation: withdrauwe not thy comfort; [c] least my soule become as earth without water. Lord, teach me to fulfill thy will, and teach me to

a 1. Kings 8. b Psal. 68. c Psal. 142.

o live worthily, and humbly in
hy sight: for thou art my wise-
dome, and doest truly knowe me;
nd didest knowe me before the
orld was made, and before I came
nto the world.

CHAP. IV.

*That we ought to live in truth and hu-
militie in the sight of God.*

SOnne, walke before me in truth, and seeke me alwayes n simplicity of heart. [a] He that alkes before me in truth, shall be efended from evill incursions: and truth shall deliver him from educers, and from detractions of he wicked. [b] If truth shall free hee, thou wilt be truly free, and ilt not care for the vaine speeches f men. O Lord, what thou say-ſt, is true and accordingly, let it e done with me. Let thy truth teach

a Gen. 17. b Wisd 1. c John 8.

teach me, let it keepe me, and bring me to a happy end. Let it deliver me from all evill affection, and all inordinate love: and I shall walke with thee in great freedome of heart.

2 I will teach thee (sayes Truth) those things which are right, and pleasing in my sight. Thinke of thy sinnes with great sorrowe, and greefe: and never esteeme thy selfe to be any thing for thy good workes. Thou art truly a sinner subject to many passions, and intangled. Of thy selfe thou alwayes tendest to [a] nothing, and art soone cast downe, soone overcome, soone troubled, soone dissolved. Thou hast nothing wherein to glory, but many things, for which thou oughtest to vilifye thy selfe: for thou art much weaker, then thou art able to comprehend.

3 Le

a 1. Cor. 4.

Let nothing therefore, seeme much to thee, whatsoever thou doest. Let nothing seeme great, nothing pretious, nothing to be admired, nothing worthy of estimation, nothing glorious, nothing truly commendable, and to be desired, but what is eternall. Let the eternall truth please thee above all things, and thy owne great unworthinesse ever displease thee. Feare blame, and fly from nothing so much, as thy sinnes and vices: which ought to displease thee more, then any losse whatsoever. Some walke not in my sight sincerely, but led by a certaine curiosity: and pride will knowe my secrets, and understand the high mysteries of God, [a] neglecting themselves, and their owne salvation. [b] These, through their pride and curiosity, whilest I resist them, doe fall often-

a Eccl. 3. b 2 Cor. 3.

times into great temptations and sinnes.

4 Feare the judgements of God, dread the wrath of the Almighty. Discusse not the workes of the Highest; but search thine owne iniquities, how many wayes thou hast offended, and how much good thou hast neglected. Some carry their devotion onely in bookes, some in pictures, some in outward signes and figures. [a] Some have me in their mouth, but little in their heart. There are others, who having their [b] understandings illuminated, and their affections purified, doe aspire continually to everlasting happinesse: are unwilling to heare of earthly things, and greive to be subject to the necessities of nature. And these feele what the spirit of Truth speaks in them; because it teaches them

a Esay 29. b Psal 24.

to despise earthly, and love heavenly things: [a] to neglect the world, and all day, and night, to desire Heaven.

[a] Psal. 1.

CHAP. V.

Of the wonderfull effect of divine Love.

1 I Blesse thee ô heavenly Father, Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, who hast vouchsafed to be mindfull of me poore wretch. [a] O Father of mercies, and God of all consolation, I give thee thankes, who sometimes doest comfort me, unworthy of all comfort. I evermore blesse, and glorify thee, with thy onely begotten Sonne, and holy Ghost the comforter for ever and ever. O my Lord God, my holy lover, when thou shalt come into my heart, all my interiour will

[a] 2 Cor 1.

rejoyce. [a] Thou art my glory, and the exultation of my heart. [b] Thou art my hope, and my refuge in the day of my tribulation.

2 But because I am yet weake in love, and imperfect in vertue; I have therefore neede to be comforted, and strenghtened by thee. Wherefore visit me often, and instruct me with thy holy discipline. Deliver me from evill passions, and heale my heart from all inordinate affections: that being cured within, and well purged, I may be made fit to love, strong to suffer, and constant to persever.

3 Love is a great thing, and a souveraigne good: which alone makes all that is heavy light, and beares equally all unequall burthens. For it supports the burthen without burthen, and that which is bitter, it makes sweete and savoury;

[a] Psal. 3. [b] Psal. 15.

veury. The noble love of Jesus spurres on to noble actions, and excites alwayes a desire of greater perfection. Love still aymes at high matters, and will not be kept downe by base things. Love will be free, and estranged from all worldly affection to the end that the interiour sight thereof may not be obscured, and that it may not be intangled by any temporall commodity, nor cast downe by any incommodity. Nothing is sweeter then love, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing more ample, nothing more pleasant, nothing more full or better in heaven or in earth: for love proceedes from God, and cannot rest but in God, above all that is created.

4 Whosoever loves he flyes, runnes, and rejoyces; he is free, and not to be restained. He gives all for all, and hath all in all; since he rests

in one supreame above all, from whom all good does flow and proceede. He regards not the gift, but converts himselfe to the giver above all good things. Love often knowes no measure, but is fervent above all measure. Love feeles no burthen, weighs no paines; affects more, then it can doe; complaines not of impossibility, because it conceives all things to be lawfull, and possible to it. And therefore it is able to do all, and fulfills many things, and subdues them to the affection, whereas he that does not love, faints and falls downe.

5 Love watches, and sleeping sleepes not. Being wearyed, is not tired; straightened, is not oppressed; frighted, is not troubled: but like a lively flame, and firy sparkle, ascends forcibly, & passes through securely. He that loves, knowes what

a Romā,

what this voice cryes: A loude cry in the eares of God, is the burning love of the soule, which sayes: O my God, my love: thou art wholy mine, and I wholy thine.

6 Encrease my love, that I may learne with the interiour mouth of my heart to taste, how sweete it is to love, and to be dissolved, and swimme in love. Let me be seized with love, ascending above my selfe through excesse of fervour, and amazement. Let me sing the song of love, and followe thee my beloved ascending on high; let my soule faint in thy praise, and rejoyce through love. Let me love thee more then my selfe; and my selfe onely for thee: and all in thee, who do truly love thee; as the law of love commands, which shines from thee.

7 Love is swift, sincere, pious, pleasant, and delightfull, strong,

patient, faithfull, prudent, long suffering, couragious, and never seeking it selfe: a for where a man seekes himselfe, there he falls from love. Love is circumspect, humble, and upright: not remisse, nor light, nor given to vanity; sober, chaste, stable, quiet, and watchfull over all the senses. b Love is subject, and obedient to Prelates; vile and abject to it selfe, devout and gratefull to God, alwayes trusting and hoping in him; even when it hath no taste of God: for there is no living in love without paine.

2 Whosoever is not ready to suffer all things, and to submit himselfe to the will of his beloved, is not worthy to be called a lover. A lover ought for his beloved, willingly to embrace all that is hard, and bitter; and never to forsake him for any accidents whatsoever.

a 1. Cor. 13. and Phil. 2. b 1. Cor. 10. Phil. 2.

CHAP.

Chap. VI.

Of the proofe of true love.

SOnne, thou art not yet a strong and prudent lover. Why Lord? Because thou giveſt over for a small adverſity, and ſeekeſt comfort too earneſtly. A ſtout lover is ſtable in temptations, and gives no credit to the crafty perſwaſions of the enemy. As I pleaſe him in proſperity, ſo am I not diſpleaſing to him in adverſity.

A prudent lover conſiders not ſo much the gift of the lover, as the love of the giver. He more eſteemes the good will, then the value, and places all gifts beneath his beloved. A noble lover reſts not in the gift, but in me above any gift. All is not therefore loſt, because thou haſt ſometimes leſſe taſte of me, and my ſaints,

a Phil. 4.

then thou wouldest. That good and sweete desire, which thou sometimes feelest, is the effect of present grace, and a certaine foretaste of the heavenly country: whereon we must not rely too much; because it comes, and goes. But to fight against the evill motions of the minde, which may arise, and to despise the suggestions of the devill, that is a signe of vertue, and of great merit.

3 Let not therefore strange fancies forced into thee, of what matter soever, trouble thee. Doe thou retaine a firme purpose, and an upright intention to God. Neither is it an illusion, when suddenly thou art rapt on high, and presently returnest to thy accustomed foolish cogitations of heart. For thou doest rather unwillingly suffer them, then cause them: and as

long

long as they displease thee, and thou strivest against them, it is merit, and no losse.

4 Knowe, that thy ancient enemy does strive altogether to hinder thy good desires, and to divert thee from all devout exercises, to wit, from the worshipping of the Saints, from the devout memory of my Passion, from the profitable remembrance of thy sinnes, from the custody of thy owne heart, and from a firme purpose of profiting in vertue. He suggests to thee many evill cogitations, that he may cause thee to feele a tediousnesse, and horrour, and so withdrawe thee from prayer, and reading of devout bookes. Humble confession does displease him, and if he could, he would make thee quit the holy Communion. Trust him not, nor care for him, though he often sett snares of deceipt to intrap

trap thee. Charge him with it, when he suggests evill, and unclean things. And say unto him: Away unclean spirit, blush miserable wretch; thou art very filthy, who bringest such things to my eares. Depart from me, wicked deceiver, thou shalt have no part in me, but Jesus shall be with me as a strong warriour, and thou shalt remaine confounded. I had rather dye, and undergoe any torment, then consent unto thee. Hold thy peace, and be silent; though thou trouble me never so much, I will heare thee no more. My Lord is my light, and my salvation, whom shall I feare? If whole armies were against me, my heart shall not be afraid. The Lord is my helper, and my Redeemer. Fight like a good souldier: and if thou doest fall sometimes through

a Matth. 4. and 10. b Psal. 104.

through frailty, recover greater forces then before, hoping to receive more abundant grace: and take heede of vaine complacence, and pride. Many are lead thereby into errour, and fall oftentimes into almost incurable blindnesse. Let this fall of proud persons, foolishly presuming of themselves, serve thee for a warning, and to conserve thee continually in humility.

CHAP. VII.

That grace is to be hidd under the vaile of humility.

1 SOnne, it is more profitable, and secure for thee, to hide the grace of devotion, and not to extoll thy selfe, nor speake much thereof, nor value it much: but rather despise thy selfe, and be afraid of it as given to one unworthy. This affection is not to be cleaved unto, which may be quickly changed

ged into the contrary. Think when thou art in grace, how miserable and needy thou art wont to be without it. Neither does the proffit of a spirituall life, consist so much in receiving the grace of comfort, as in the humble resigned patient suffering the withdrawing thereof; so that it make thee not more sloathfull in the exercise of prayer, nor to permit thy selfe to neglect the rest of thy accustomed good workes: but that thou willingly performe what lyes in thee, according to thy ability and understanding; not wholy neglecting thy selfe, through the drynesse and anxiety of minde which thou feelest.

2 For there be many, who when it succeedes not well with them, become forthwith impatient, or sloathfull.[a] The way of man is not alwayes

a Ier 10. and Rom 9.

alwayes in his owne power; but it belongs to God to give, and to comfort when he will, how much he will, and whom he will, as it shall please him, and no more. Some unadvisedly have ruined themselves, through the grace of devotion, because they would doe more then they well could, not weighing the measure of their weakness, but following the desire of their heart, rather then the judgement of reason. And because they presumed of greater matters, then were pleasing to God, they therefore lost his grace. They, who built themselves nests in heaven, were made needy, and left in a dejected state; to the end that being humbled, and impoverished, they may learne not to fly with their owne wings, but to hope under mine. Those who are yet new, and unacquainted in the way of our

Lord,

Lord, unleſſe they gouerne themſelues by the counſell of diſcreete perſons, may eaſily be deceiued and ouerthrowne.

3 And if they will rather follow their owne iudgement, then beleeue others that are experienced, their end will be dangerous, if they cannot be withdrawne from their owne conceipts. Thoſe who are wiſe in their owne opinions, ſeldome ſuffer themſelues humbly to be gouerned by others. A little knowledge with humility, and a weake vnderſtanding, is better then great treaſures of learning with vaine complacence. [a] It is better for thee to haue leſſe, then much, of that whereof thou mayeſt be proude. He does not diſcreetly, that giues himſelfe wholy to mirth, forgetting his former want, and the chaſte feare of God, which feares

[a] Prou. 15. and 16.

feares to loose the grace that is offered. Neither is he also virtuously wise enough, who in time of adversity, or any tribulation whatsoever, gives way to thoughts of dispaire, and thinkes, and conceives lesse confidently of me, then he ought.

4 He who is too secure in time of peace, [a] will be found often in time of warre too much dejected, and fearfull. If thou couldest alwayes continue humble, and lowly within thy selfe, and temper, and gouverne thy soule well; thou wouldest not so soone fall into danger, and offence. [b] It is good councell, that when thou conceivest fervour of spirit, thou shouldest thinke, what will become of thee, when that light shall leave thee. And if that happen, to remember, that light may returne,

a 1. Thess 3. b Iob 17.

which for thy instruction, and my glory, I have for a time withdrawne.

5 Such a triall is oftentimes more profitable, then if thou shouldest alwayes enjoy prosperity, according to thy desire. For a mans deserts are not to be judged by the many visions, and comforts which he receivos; nor by his knowledge in Scriptures, nor by his being placed in high degree: but by his being a grounded in true humility, and repleni shed with divine charity: and that he alwayes seekes purely and intirely the honour of God; and esteemes nothing of himselfe, but with a sincere heart does despise himselfe, and rejoyces more to be despised, and humbled by others, then to be honoured.

a Psal. 83.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Of a meane esteeme of our selfe in the sight of God.

I Will speake to my Lord, though I am but dust and ashes. If I esteeme better of my selfe, behold thou doest resist me: and my iniquities beare true witnesse against me, nor can I contradict them. But if I abuse my selfe, and reduce my selfe to nothing, and cast away all selfe conceipt, and account my selfe, as I am, but dust; thy grace will be favourable to me, and thy light neare my heart: and all estimation, how little soever, will be swallowed up in the depth of my nothing, and perish for ever. Then wilt thou shewe me my selfe, what I am, what I have beene, and from what I came: for I am nothing, and

a Gen. 18.

knew it not. If I be left to my ſelfe, behold I become nothing, and a maſſe of infirmity. But if thou ſuddenly looke upon me, I am preſently ſtrenghened, and repleniſhed with new joy. And it is very wonderfull, that I (who of my owne weight ſinke continually to the ground) am ſo ſuddenly raiſed, and ſo graciouſly embraced by thee.

2 It is thy love that does this, preventing and relieving me freely in ſo many neceſſities, preſerving me alſo from greivous perills, and delivering me (as I may truly ſay) from innumerable evills. [a] For by ill loving of my ſelfe, I loſt my ſelfe: and by ſeeking thee alone, and purely loving thee, I have found both my ſelfe, and thee; and through thy love have brought my ſelfe more profoundly to nothing.

a Iohn 12.

thing. For that thou, ô moſt ſweete Jeſus, doeſt deale with me above all deſert, and above all that I dare hope, or aske for.

3 Bleſſed be thou my God: for although I be unworthy of all good, yet thy nobleneſſe, and infinite goodneſſe ceaſe not to doe good, even to the ungratefull, and ſuch as are averted from thee. Convert us unto thee, that we may be gratefull, humble, and devout: for thou art our ſafety, our power, and our ſtrength.

CHAP. IX.

That all things are to be referred unto God, as to the laſt end.

1 SOnne, I ought to be thy ſupreame and laſt end, if thou deſire to be truly bleſſed. By this intention, thy affection, which is oftentimes inclined inordinately to it ſelfe, and unto creatures, ſhall be

purified. For if thou seekest thy selfe in any thing, thou doest presently wither, and dry up. Refer therefore all things cheifly to me, for it is I who have given thee all. Doe thou consider every thing, as flowing from the souveraigne good: and therefore all things are to be reduced unto me, as to their first beginning.

2 Out of me, as out of a living fountaine, the little and great, rich and poore, doe drawe the water of life: [a] And whosoever shall willingly and freely serve me, he shall receive grace for grace. [b] But he that will glory out of me, or be delighted in any particular good, shall not be grounded in true joy, nor injoy freedome of heart, but shall many wayes be hindered, and straightened. Thou must ascribe therefore no good to thy selfe, nor attri-

a Iohn 4. b 1 Cor. 1.

attribute vertue to any man; but give all unto God, without whom man hath nothing. [a] I have given all, and I will have all returned to me again: and with great severity require a gratefull acknowledgement.

3 This is the truth, by which vaine glory is put to flight. And where heavenly grace, and true charity enter, there no envy, nor grudging of heart shall abide, nor no place be left for selfe love. For divine charity overcomes all, and dilates all the forces of the soule. [b] If thou beest truly wise, thou wilt rejoyce, and hope in none, but me: for none is good, but onely God, who is to be praised above all, and in all to be blessed, for ever and ever. Amen.

a 1. Cor. 4. b Matth. 19. and Luke 18.

CHAP. X.

That despising the world, it is sweete to serve God.

1 NOw will I speake againe, ô my Lord, and will not be silent. I will say in the hearing of my God, my Lord, and King, that is on high: [a]O how great is the multitude of thy sweetnesse, ô Lord, which thou hast layd up for those that feare thee! But what art thou to those that feare and love thee? What to those who serve thee with all their heart? Unspeakable indeede is the sweetnesse of thy contemplation, which thou bestowest on them that love thee. [b]In this most of all hast thou shewed me the sweetnesse of thy charity, that when I had no being, thou didst make me: and when I strayed farre from thee, thou didst bring me

a Psal. 30. b Gen. 1. Psal. 118. and Matth. 25.

me back againe, that I might serve thee: and hast commanded me to love thee.

2 O fountaine of everlasting love, what shall I say of thee? How can I forget thee, who hast vouchsafed to remember me, even when I withered away, and perished? Thou hast used mercy to thy servant above all hope: and beyond all desert. hast vouchsafed me thy favour and freindship. What shall I returne to thee for this grace? For it is not granted to all, to forsake all, to renounce the world, and embrace a monasticall life. Is it much, that I serve thee, whom all creatures are bound to serve? It ought not to seeme much to me to serve thee: but rather this seemes wonderfull to me, that thou hast vouchsafed to admit into thy service so poore and unworthy a

M 5 wretch,

a Iudith 16.

wretch, and to associate him to thy beloved servants.

3 Behold all is thine that I have, and doe serve thee withall. And yet in truth, thou rather serveſt me, then I thee. Behold heaven and earth, which thou haſt created for the service of man, they are ready at hand, and doe dayly performe whatsoever thou haſt commanded. [a] And this is but little, for thou haſt moreover created, and appointed the Angells for the service of man. [b] But which is farre above all, thou thy ſelfe haſt vouchſafed to serve man, and promiſed to give thy ſelfe unto him.

4 What ſhall I give thee for all theſe thouſands of benefits? O that I could serve thee all the dayes of my life. O that I were able at leaſt one day to serve thee worthily. Thou art indeede worthy of all ſer-

a 1 Cor. 3. b Pſal. 90. and Hebr. 1.

ſervice, of all honour, and everla-ſting praiſe. Thou art truly my Lord, and I thy poore ſervant, who am bound to ſerve thee with all my forces, and never growe weary of praiſing thee. This is my wiſh, this my deſire: and whatſoever is wanting in me, vouchſafe to ſupply it I beſeech thee.

5 It is a great honour, great glory, to ſerve thee, and deſpiſe all things for thee. For they ſhall receive great grace, who willingly ſubject themſelves to thy holy ſervice. They ſhall finde the moſt ſweete comfort of the holy Ghoſt, who for thy love ſhall renounce all carnall delight. They ſhall attaine great freedome of minde, who for thy name [a] enter into the narrow way, and ſhall neglect all care of the world.

6 O ſweete and delightfull ſervice

a Math. 7.

vice of God, by which man is made truly free, and holy! O sacred state of religious bondage, [a] which makes man equall to Angells, pleasing to God, terrible to devill, and commendable to all faithfull people! O service to be embraced, and alwayes wished for, by which the greatest good is obtained, and that joy acquired, which shall never have end.

a Math. 11. and Iohn 13.

CHAP. XI.

That the desires of our heart are to be examined, and moderated.

1 SOnne, thou must learne many things, which thou hast not yet well learned. a What are those Lord? b That thou frame thy desire wholy according to my pleasure: and be no lover of thy selfe, but a diligent lover and follower

a Psal. 107. b Math. 6.

lower of my will. Thy desires doe oftentimes stirre thee up, and violently drive thee: but consider, whither thou art moved rather for my honour, then thy owne profit. If I be the cause, thou wilt be well content with whatsoever I shall ordaine; but if there lurke in thee any selfe inclination, behold this is it, that hinders and weighes thee downe.

2 Beware therefore, thou relye not too much upon any desire that comes to thy minde, before thou hast consulted with me; least perhaps afterward it repent thee, and that dislike thee, which before pleased thee, and which thou didst earnestly desire as the best. For every affection, which seemes good, is not presently to be followed: nor every contrary affection to be rejected. It is expedient sometimes to

a Phil 2.

to use a restraint, even in good desires and endeavours; least through importunity thou shouldest incurre distraction of minde; or by ill example, become a scandall to others; or else being opposed by others, suddenly become troubled and fall.

3. Sometimes notwithstanding we must use violence, and manfully resist the sensuall appetite; and not regard what the flesh would, or would not: but rather labour, that even perforce it become subject to the spirit. And it is so long to be chastised, and kept under servitude, untill it readily obey in all things, and learne to be content with a little, and to be pleased with ordinary things, and not to murmure at any inconveniences.

a Matt. 11. Rom. 8. 2. Cor. 4. 2. Cor. 10. 2. Cor. 12.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Of the effect of patience, and strife against concupiscence.

O Lord God, patience, as I perceive, is very necessary for me, [a] since many adversities doe happen in this life. [b] For howsoever I dispose of my peace, my life cannot be without warre and affliction. So it is sonne. But my will is not, that thou seeke after that peace, which is voyde of temptations, or that feeles no contrarieties: but then conceive thou hast found peace, when thou shalt be exercised with sundry [c] tribulations and tried in many adversities.

2 If thou say, thou art not able to suffer much, how wilt thou then endure the fire of purgatory? Of two evills the least is alwayes to be chosen. That thou mayest there-

[a] Heb. 10. [b] Iob 7. [c] Iam. 1.

therefore avoyde everlasting punishment in the world to come, endeavour to suffer patiently for God the present evills of this. Doest thou thinke that men of this world suffer little or nothing? Thou shalt not finde it so, though thou seeke out those that live in greatest delicacies. But they have sayest thou, many delights and followe their owne wills: and therefore make small account of their tribulations. Be it so that they have whatsoever they will, but how long doest thou thinke it will last? 3 Behold all those, who abound in this world, shall vanish away like smoake, and there shall be no memory of their past joyes. [a] Yea even also, whilest they live, they rest not in them without greife, irkesomnesse, and feare. For the very same thing, in which they take delight,

[a] Psal 67.

delight, does often cause them sorrowe and affliction. It is but iustice that they who inordinately seeke and followe pleasures, should not obtaine them without bitternesse and confusion.

4 O how short, how deceiptfull, how inordinate and filthy are all those pleasures? yet through drunkennesse and blindnesse men understand not, but like dumbe beasts, for a little pleasure of a corruptible life they incurre the eternall of their soules. Doe not thou therefore, my sonne, runne after thy concupiscences, but forsake thy owne will. [a] Delight in our Lord, and he will grant thee the petitions of thy heart.

5 For if thou wilt indeede be truly delighted, and more aboundantly comforted by me, behold in the contempt of all worldly things,

[a] Psal. 36.

and in cutting of all base delight shall be thy blessing, and abundant comfort shall be given thee. And so much the more as thou withdrawest thy selfe from all solace of creatures, so much the sweeter and more powerfull consolations shalt thou finde in me. But thou shalt not at first attaine unto them without a certaine griefe and labour of strife. The old custome will make resistance; but by a better custome it shall be overcome. The flesh will murmure; but by fervour of spirit it shall be quelled. The old serpent will sting and trouble thee; but by prayer he shall be put to flight. And through profitable labour his strong assault shall be repulsed.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the obedience of an humble subject according to the example of Iesus Christ.

SOnne, whosoever endeavours to [a] withdrawe himselfe from obedience, withdraweth himselfe from grace. And he that desires private things, shall loose the common. If any one does not willingly and freely submit himselfe to his superiour, it is a signe that his flesh is not perfectly obedient to him, but oftentimes rebells and murmures. Learne therefore readily to submit thy selfe to thy superiour, if thou desirest to subdue thy owne flesh. For the exteriour enemy is sooner overcome, if the interiour be not out of order. There is no worse, nor more troublesome enemy to the soule, then

a Math. 26.

thou to thy ſelfe, not agreeing well with the ſpirit. For of neceſſity thou muſt have a true contempt of thy ſelfe, if thou wilt prevaile againſt fleſh and bloud.

2. Becauſe thou yet loveſt thy ſelfe too inordinately, thou art therefore afraid to reſigne thy ſelfe wholy to the will of others. But what great matter is it, if thou, who art duſt and nothing, ſubmitteſt thy ſelfe to man for God, when I the Almighty and higheſt Soveraigne, who created all things of nothing, have humbly ſubmitted my ſelfe to man for thee? I became the moſt humble and abject of all men, that thou mighteſt overcome thy pride by my humility. Learne to obey thou who art duſt, learne to humble thy ſelfe thou who art earth and clay, and put thy ſelfe under the feete of

all men. Learne to breake thy owne will, and to yeild thy selfe to all subjection.

3 Take courage against thy selfe, and suffer not pride to live in thee: but humble and submit thy selfe in such manner, that every one may trample on thee, and treade thee under their feete as durt of the streetes. O vaine man, what canst thou complaine of? What canst thou answer, foule sinner, to them that reproove thee, who hast so many times offended God and deserved hell? But my eye hath spared thee, because thy soule was precious in my sight, that thou mightest knowe my love, and always remaine gratefull for my benefits: and that thou mightest give thy selfe continually to true subjection and humility, and mightest beare patiently all contempt.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the secret judgements of God to be considered, least we be extolled in our good deedes.

1 THou thundrest thy judgements over me, ô Lord, and shakest all my bones with feare and trembling, and my soule is sore afraid. [a] I stand astonished, and consider for that the heavens are not pure in thy sight. If thou hast found wickednesse in the Angells, and hast not pardoned them, what shall become of me? [b] Starres fell from heaven, and what doe I presume, who am but dust? They whose workes seemed laudable, fell into the lowest hell; [c] and those who have eaten the bread of Angells, I have seene delighted with the huskens of swine.

2 There is therefore no sanctity, if

a Iob 13. b Iob 4. c Apoc. 8. d Psal. 77.

if thou, ô Lord, withdrawest thy hand. No wisdome availes, if thou ceasest to governe. No strength helpes, if thou leavest to conserve. No charity is secure, if thou doest not protect it. No custody of our owne profitable, if thy sacred vigilancy be not present. For if thou leavest us, we sinke and perish; but if thou doest visit us, we live and are raised up. We are unconstant, but by thee we are confirmed. We growe cold, but by thee we are inflamed.

O how humbly and basely ought I to thinke of my selfe! how little ought I to esteeme it, if I seeme to have any good! O Lord, how profoundly ought I to submit my selfe under the abysse of thy judgements, where I finde my selfe to be nothing else but nothing and nothing. O immense weight! O sea that can never be

passed over? where I finde my self nothing but wholy nothing. Where then is the lurking hole of glory? Where confidence conceived of glory? All vaine glory is swallowed up in the depth of thy judgements, which hang over me.

4 What is all flesh in thy sight? Shall clay glory against him that frames it? How can he be puffed up with vaine wordes, whose heart is truly subject to God? All the world can not puffe him up, whom truth hath subjected to it self; neither shall he, who hath settled his whole hope in God, be moved with the tongues of those that praise him. For behold even all they that speake are nothing, for they shall passe away with the sound of thy wordes. But the truth of our Lord remaines for ever.

a Ezech. 29. and Esay 29. b Psal. 116.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

What we ought to doe and say in every thing we desire.

SOnne say thus in every thing: O Lord, if it be pleasing to thee, let it be done in this sort. Lord, if it be to thy honour, let it be done in thy Name. Lord, if thou seest and approvest it to be expedient and profitable for me, then grant that I may use it to thy honour. But if thou knowest it will be hurtfull for me, and not conducing to the health of my soule, take from me such a desire. For every desire is not from the holy Ghost, though it seeme to man right and good. It is hard to judge truly, whither a good spirit or the contrary drives thee to desire this or that, or whither thou art moved to it by thy owne spirit.

a Iam. 3.

Many are deceived in the end, who at first seemed to be lead by a good spirit.

2 Whatsoever therefore occurres to thy minde to be desired and demanded, let it alwayes be delired with the feare of God, and humility of heart, and above all with resignation of thy selfe thou art to commit all to me, and say: O Lord thou knowest what is best, doe this or that, as thou pleasest. Give what thou wilt, how much thou wilt, and when thou wilt. Doe with me as thou knowest, and as best pleases thee, and is most for thy honour. Put me where thou wilt, and freely dispose of me in all things. I am in thy hand; turne me, and winde me about as thou pleasest. Behold I am thy servant, ready to all things: for I desire not to live to my selfe, but to thee. I pray God it may be perfectly and worthily.

A prayer

A prayer for the fulfilling of the will of God.

Grant me thy grace, most merciful Jesus, that it may be with me, and labour with me, and persevere with me to the end. Grant me alwayes to will and desire that which is most acceptable to thee, and best pleases thee. Let thy will be mine, and let my ever followe thine, and agree perfectly with it. Let my will and nill be all one with thine, and let me not be able to will or refuse any thing but what thou willest and rejectest it.

4 Grant that I may dye to all that is in the world, and love for thy sake to be contemned, and not to be knowne in this world. Grant that above all things that can be desired, I may rest in thee, and bring my heart to enjoy peace in thee,

a Wild. p.

thee. Thou art the true peace o
the heart, thou art the onely re
out of thee, all things are trouble
some and unquiet. [a] In peace in th
selfe same, that is in thee, the o
souveraigne and eternall good,
will sleepe and rest.

a Psal. 4.

CHAP. XVI.

That true comfort is to be sought in God alone.

WHatsoever I can desire o
imagine for my comfort,
expect not in this life, but hereaf
ter. [a] For if I alone should hav
all the comforts of the world, an
might enjoy all the riches of it, i
is certaine they can not last long.
[b] Wherefore thou canst not, my
soule, be fully comforted, nor per
fectly delighted but in God, the
comforter of the poore, and the

a Matth. 26. b Psal. 76.

ceiver of the humble. Expect a ittle while, my ſoule, expect the ivine promiſe, and thou ſhalt ha aboundance of all good things heaven. If thou doeſt too inor dinately deſire theſe preſent things, thou ſhalt looſe thoſe that are cel eſtiall and eternall. Have tempo rall things in uſe, and eternall in deſire. Thou canſt not be ſatiated with any temporall good, becauſe thou art not created to enjoy them.

Although thou ſhouldeſt en joy all that is created, yet cannot that make thee happy nor bleſſed, But in God, who created all things, does thy beatitude and happineſſe conſiſt: [a] not ſuch as is ſeene and praiſed by the fooliſh lovers of this world; but ſuch as the good faithfull ſervants of Chriſt expect, [b] and of which the ſpirituall and cleane of heart (whoſe converſa-

a Wiſd. 2. b Phil. 3.

tion is in heaven) have sometime a foretaste. Vaine and short is humane solace: blessed and true that which is received inward through Truth. A devout man eyes every where about with his comforter Jesus, and sayes to him: Be present unto me, Lord Jesus, at all times and in all places. Let this be my consolation, to be alwayes willing to want all humane solace; and if thy comfort be wanting, let thy will and just probation be to me as the greatest comfort. For thou wilt not be angry alwayes, neither wilt thou threaten for ever.

CHAP. XVII.

That we ought to cast all our care upon God.

LOrd, suffer me to doe with thee what I will; I knowe

what

what is expedient for thee. Thou thinkest as man: thou judgest in many things as humane affection perswades thee. It is true, Lord, as thou sayest. Thy sollicitude over me is greater then all the care I can take for my selfe. For he stands at too great a hazard, who casts not his whole care upon thee. Lord, as long as my will remaines right and firme in thee, doe with me whatsoever it shall please thee: for it cannot but be good whatsoever thou doest with me.

If thou wilt have me be in darknesse, be thou blessed: and if thou wilt have me be in light, be thou againe blessed. If thou doest vouchsafe to comfort me, be thou blessed: and if thou wilt have me afflicted, be thou equally ever blessed. Sonne, in this state must thou stand, if thou doest desire to walke

* Matth. 6. and Iohn 6.

walke with me. Thou must be
ready to suffer, as to rejoyce. Thou
must be as willing to be poore and
needy, as plentifull and rich.

3 Lord I will suffer willingly for
thee, whatsoever thy pleasure
shall befall me. I will receive it
differently from thy hand good
and evill, sweete and bitter, joyfull
and sorrowfull; and will give thee
thankes for all that happens to me.
Keepe me from all sinne, and I will
feare neither death nor hell. As
long as thou doest not cast me
from thee for ever, nor blott me
out of the booke of life, what tri-
bulation soever shall befall me
shall not hurt me.

CHAP. XVIII.

That temporall miseries by the example of Christ are to be borne patiently.

SOnne, I descended from heaven for thy salvation, a I tooke upon me thy miseries, not of necessity, but drawne to it by charity; that thou mightest learne patience, and willingly to beare temporall miseries. For from the houre of my birth untill my death on the Crosse I was not without suffering. I suffered great want of temporall things. I heard frequently many complaints against me. I meekely sustained opprobries and confusions. For benefits I received ingratitude: for miracles, blasphemies: for doctrine, reprehensions.

2 Lord, since thou wert patient

O in

a Iohn 3. b Esay 53. Luke 2. c Iohn 8.

in thy life time, in this chiefly fulfilling the commandment of thy Father; it is just that I, most miserable sinner, should according to thy will patiently behave my selfe and for my owne salvation beare the burthen of this corrupt life, as long as thou pleasest. For though this present life be felt burthensome, yet notwithstanding now by thy grace, it is made very meritorious, and by thy example, and the foote-steppes of thy Saints more plaine and tolerable to the weake. Yea much more comfortable, also then it was in times past in the old Law, when the gate of heaven was shut, and the way thither seemed more darker, when so few tooke care to seeke after the kingdome of heaven. Neither could they, who were then just and to be saved, enter into the heaven-

ly Kingdome, before thy Passion and the debt of thy sacred Death was discharged.

O how great thankes am I bound to give thee, who hast vouchsafed to shewe unto me, and all faithfull soules, a right and good way to thy everlasting Kingdome! For thy life is our way: and by holy patience we walke to thee, who are our Crowne. If thou hadst not gone before, and taught us, who would have taken care to follow? Alas, how many would stay behinde, and remaine farre of, if they beheld not thy excellent examples? Behold, we are yet cold, though we have heard of so many of thy wonders and documents: what would become of us, if we had not so great light to follow thee.

Chap. XIX.

Of suffering of injuries, and who is proved to be truly patient.

1 WHat is it thou sayest, Sonne? Cease to complaine considering my Passion, and that of other Saints. a Thou hast not yet resisted to the shedding of bloud. b It is but little thou suffrest in comparison of them, who have suffered so much, beene so strongly tempted, so greivously afflicted, so many wayes tryed and exercised. Thou ought'st therefore to call to minde the heavy sufferings of others, that thou mayest more easily beare thy little ones. And if they seeme not little to thee, take heede least thy impatience be the cause thereof. But whether they be great or small, endeavour to suffer them all patiently.

2 So

a Heb. 12. b Heb. 11.

2 So much better as thou disposest thy selfe to suffer, so much more wisely thou doest, and so much more doest thou merit. And thou wilt beare it more easily, if thy minde be diligently prepared and thou accustomed thereunto. Thou mayest not say, I cannot suffer these things from such a man, and these kinde of things are not to be suffered by me: for he hath done me great wrong, and upbraided me with those things I never thought of: but from another I will willingly suffer, and as I shall see cause of suffering. Such a thought is foolish, which considers not the vertue of patience, nor by whom it shall be crowned; but rather weighs the persons and injuries offered.

3 He is not truly patient who will suffer but so much as he thinkes good, and from whom he plea-

ſes. He that is truly patient, minides not by whom he is exerciſed; whither by his Prelate, or ſome of his equalls, or by his inferiours: whither by a good and holy man, or by a perverſe and unworthy perſon. But indifferently from all creatures, how much ſoever, or how often ſoever any adverſity happens unto him, he takes all thankfully as from the hand of God, and eſteemes it a great gaine; becauſe nothing, how little ſoever ſo it be ſuffered for God, can be without merit in his ſight.

4. Be thou therefore alwayes prepared for the fight, if thou wilt have the victory. [a] Without a combat thou canſt not attaine to the crowne of patience. If thou wilt not ſuffer, thou refuſeſt to be crowned. But if thou deſireſt to be crowned, fight manfully, and endure

[a] 2 Tim. 2.

ture patiently. Without labour here is no comming to rest, nor without fight can the victory be obtained. Lord, make that possible to me by grace, which seemes impossible to me by nature. Thou knowest I can suffer little, and that I am quickly dejected when a small adversity arises. Let all exercise of tribulation and adversity be made amiable and desiderable to me for thy names sake: for to suffer, and be vexed for thee, is very healthfull to my soule.

CHAP. XX.

Of the confession of our infirmity, and the miseries of this life.

I Will confesse against me my injustice: I will confesse unto thee, O Lord, my infirmity. It is oftentimes a small matter that dejects and greives me. I purpose to

a Psal. 31.

doe courageously; but when a small temptation comes, it brings me to great streights. It is sometimes a very trifle from whence great temptation does proceede. And whileſt I thinke my ſelfe ſomewhat ſafe, and doe not feele it, I finde my ſelfe overcome ſometimes with a ſmall blaſt.

2 Behold therefore my humility and frailty every way knowne unto thee. a Have mercy on me, and deliver me out of the mire, that I ſtick not faſt therein. b Let me not for ever remaine dejected. This is that which often beates me backe, and confounds me in thy ſight, becauſe I am ſo ſubject to fall, and weake in reſiſting paſſions. And though I doe not altogether conſent, yet their aſſaults are troubleſome and greivous to me, and it is very teadious to live thus in dayly ſtrife.

a Pſal. 24. b Pſal. 68.

nise. My infirmity is hereby made knowne unto me, since wicked fancies doe alwayes much more easily enter in upon me, then they can be cast out againe.

O most mighty God of Israel, zealous lover of faithfull soules, I beseech thee, regard the labour and sorrowe of thy servant, and assist him in all whatsoever he undertakes. Strenghten me with heavenly force, least the old man, miserable fleth, not yet subject to the spirit, prevaile and get the upper hand, against which we must fight as long as we breath in this miserable life. Alas, what kinde of life is this, where tribulations and miseries are never wanting? where all things are full of snares and enemies? For one tribulation or temptation going away, another comes, yea during the first conflict, many others come one upon another

and unexpected.

4 And how can a life be loved that hath so many afflictions and is subiect to so many calamities and miseries? How is it called a life, that begets so many deaths and plagues? And yet it is loved, and many seeke to delight themselves in it. The world is often blamed that it is deceitfull and vaine, and yet it is not easily forsaken, because the concupiscence of the flesh gouvernes. Somethings drawe us to love it, and others to contemne it.[a] The concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and pride of life, doe drawe us to the love of the world; but the paines and miseries that attend it, breed a hatred and loathing of it.

5 But alas, wicked pleasure overcomes a minde given to the world, and such a one esteemes the pleasing

a 1. John 2.

sing of her senses a delight, because she hath neither seene nor tasted the sweetnesse of God, and the interiour delight of vertue. But they who perfectly contemne the world, and endeavour to live to God under holy discipline, are not ignorant of the divine sweetnesse, that is promised to the true forsakers of the world; and discerne clearly how grievously the world erres, and how many wayes it is deceived.

a 1 ob 30.

CHAP. XXI.

That we are to rest in God above all goods and gifts.

1 O My soule, above all things, and in all things, dost thou ever rest in God, for he is the eternall rest of the Saints. Grant me, ô most sweete and loving Jesus, to rest in thee above all creatures, a-

boye

bove all health, and beauty; abo
all glory, and honour; above
power, and dignity; above
knowledge, and subtility; abo
all riches, and arts; above all jo
and gladneſſe; above all fame, a
praiſe; above all ſweetneſſe, a
comfort; above all hope, and pro
miſe; above all merit, and deſire
above all gifts, and rewards, th
thou canſt give and impart; abo
all joy, and jubilation, that a hu
mane minde can receive and feele
Laſtly above Angells, and Archan
gells; and above all the heavenl
hoaſt; above all things viſible, an
inviſible; and above all that thou
art not, my God,

2 For thou, my Lord God, ar
good above all goods: thou alone
moſt powerfull, thou alone moſt
full and ſufficient, thou alone moſt
ſweete and comfortable, thou alo-
ne moſt beautifull and loving, thou
alone

lone most noble and glorious a-
ove all things: in whom all good
hings together are, have beene,
nd ever shall be most perfectly.
And therefore, whatsoever thou
estowest on me besides thy selfe,
or revealest of thy selfe, or promi-
sest; whilest thou art not seene,
nor fully obtained, is too little, and
unsufficient. Because indeede my
heart cannot truly rest, nor be ful-
ly contented, unlesse it rest in thee:
and transcend all gifts and creatu-
res whatsoever.

O my most beloved spouse
Christ Jesus, the most pure lover,
the gouvernour of all creatures!
O who will give me wings of true
liberty to fly, and rest in thee? O
when shall it be fully granted me,
to attend to my selfe and see, how
sweete thou art my Lord God!
When shall I fully recollect my

selfe

selfe in thee, that through thy lo
ve I may not feele my selfe, b
thee alone above all sense, an
manner, in a manner not known
to all: But now I frequent
mourne, and beare my infelici
with greife: because many evil
occure in this vale of misery,
which doe often trouble, greive,
and darken me; often hinder, and
distract me; allure, and intangle
me, that I may not have free ac
cesse to thee, and enjoy thy sweete
embracements, alwayes ready for
blessed spirits. Let my sighes, and
manifold desolations on earth mo
ve thee.

O Jesus, splendor of eternall
glory, the comfort of a pilgrime
come before thee: my tongue is
without voice, and my silence
speakes to thee. How long doe
my Lord delay to come? Let him
come

a Deut. 13.

come to me his poore servant, and make me glad. Let him stretch forth his hand, and deliver me wretch from all anguish. Come, come, for without thee there will be no joyfull day nor houre; because thou art my joy, and without thee my table is empty. I am a wretched creature, and in a manner imprisoned, and loaded with fetters; until thou comfort me with the sight of thy presence, and give me liberty, and shewe me a favourable countenance.

Let others seeke what they please instead of thee: but for me nothing does, or shall delight me, but thou my God, my hope, and everlasting health. I will not hold my peace, nor cease to pray, until thy grace returne, and thou speake to me interiourly: Lo, I am here. Behold, I come to thee, because thou hast called upon me; thy teares, and

the

the desire of thy soule, thy humiliation and the contrition of thy heart have inclined, and brought me to thee.
And I said: Lord I have called upon thee, and desired to enjoy thee being ready to forsake all things for thee. For thou didst first stir me up that I might seeke thee. Blessed be thou therefore ô Lord who hast shewed this goodnesse to thy servant, according to the multitude of thy mercies.

6 What hath thy servant more to say before thee, but that he doth greatly humble himselfe in thy sight, alwayes mindfull of his owne iniquity, and baseneſſe? [a] For there is none like unto thee in all whatsoever is wonderfull, in heaven and earth. Thy wordes are good, thy judgements true, and by thy providence all things are governed. Praise therefore and glory

a Psal. 85.

be unto thee, ô wisdome of the eternall Father! let my tongue, my soule, and all creatures together praise and bleſſe thee.

CHAP. XXII.

Of the remembrance of the manifold benefits of God.

1 OPen, o Lord, my heart in thy Lawe, and teach me to walke in thy commandements. Grant me to understand thy will, and to remember thy benefits, as well in generall, as in particular, with great reverence and diligent consideration: that hence forward I may be able worthily to give thee thanks. But I knowe and confesse, that I am not able to give thee due thanks, for the favours which thou bestowest upon me, even in the least moment I am, lesse then the least of thy benefits: and

a Psal 2 9.

when I consider the excellency o
thy Majesty, the greatnesse there
makes my spirit to faint.

2 All that we have in our soul
and body, and whatsoever we pos
sesse outwardly or inwardly, natu
rally or spiritually, are thy benefits
and doe praise thee as bountifull
pious, and good, from whom we
have received all that is good. Al
though one hath received more,
another lesse, all notwithstandin
are thine, and without thee eve
the least cannot be had. He tha
hath received greater, cannot glor
of his owne desert, nor extoll him
selfe above others, nor insult ove
the lesser: for he is greater and
better that ascribes least unto him
selfe, and is more humble & devou
in rendring thanks. And he that e
steemes himselfe basest of all men,
& judges himselfe most unworthy,
is fittest to receive greater bles
sings.

3 And

And he that hath received fewer, ought not to be sorry nor beare it impatiently, nor envy them that are enriched with greater store, but attend rather unto thee, and chiefly praise thy goodnesse, for that thou bestowest thy gifts so bountifully, so freely, and so willingly without respect of persons All things proceed from thee, and therefore in all things thou art to be praised. Thou knowest what is fit to be given to every one: and why this man hath lesse, and he more, it is not ours, but thine to determine, who doest weigh in just measure the deserts of every one.

4 Wherefore my Lord God, I esteeme it as a great benefit not to have much, whereby outwardly and before men I might seeme worthy of praise and glory: so that he, who considers his owne poverty, and baseneſſe, ought not there-

fore to conceive greife, or sorrow, or to be therefore troubled, but rather to take great comfort, and to be glad: for that thou, ô God, hast chosen the poore and humble, and the despised of this world for thy selfe, and for thy familiar and domesticall freinds. Witnesses are thy Apostles thēselves, whom thou hast appointed princes over all the earth. And yet they lived without complaint in the world, so humble and simple, meane to the eyes of men, without all malice and deceipt, [b] that they rejoyced to receive contumelies for thy name: and what the world abhorres, they imbraced with great affection.

5 Nothing therefore ought so to rejoyce him that loves thee, and acknowledges thy benefits, as the accomplishment of thy will in himselfe, and the pleasure of thy eter-

a Psal. 44. 1. Cor. 1. 4. Thess. 2. b Act. 7.

eternall appointment: wherewith he ought to be so contented and comforted, that he would as willingly be the least, as any would wish to be the greatest: and as peaceable and content in the last, as in the first place: and as willingly to be despised and contemned, and to be of no esteeme or account, as to be preferred in honour before all things: and to comfort him more, and please him better, then all the benefits which he hath received, or can desire.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of foure things that bring much peace.

SOnne, now I will teach thee the way of peace, and true liberty. Doe Lord, I beseech thee, as thou sayest, for I shall be very glad to heare it. [a] Endeavour my Sonne

a Math. 26. Iohn 5. 6.

to doe rather the will of another, then thine owne. [a] Ever chooſe rather to have leſſe then more. Alwayes ſeeke the loweſt place, and to be inferiour to every one. [b] Wiſh alwayes, and pray, that the will of God may be fulfilled in thee. Behold ſuch a man enters into the limits of peace and moſt quiet reſt.

2. O Lord, this thy ſhort ſpeech cõtaines much perfection. It is little in words, but full in ſenſe, and aboundant in fruit. For if it could exactly be kept by me, then ſhould I not ſo eaſily be troubled. For as often as I feele my ſelfe unquiet, and afflicted, I finde that I have ſtrayed from this doctrine. But thou that canſt all things, and ever loveſt the good and profit of my ſoule, increaſe in me thy grace, that I may fulfill thy words, and perfect mine owne health.

a 1. Cor. 10. b Math. 4. c Math. 5.

A Prayer against evill thoughts.

3 My Lord God, be not farre from me: my God have regard to helpe me, for sundry thoughts have risen up against me, and great feares afflicting my soule. How shall I passe through them without hurt? How shall I breake them? I, saith he, will goe before thee, and will humble the glorious of the earth, I will open the doores of the prison, and reveale unto thee the hidden secrets. Doe Lord as thou sayest, and let all evill thoughts fly from before thy face. This is my hope, and my onely comfort, to flie unto thee in all tribulation, to trust in thee, to call upon thee from my heart, and to expect patiently thy comfort.

a Psal. 70. b Isa. 45.

A Prayer for the enlightening of the minde.

4 Enlighten me good Jesu, with the clearnesse of inward light, and expell all darknesse of my heart. Represse the many wandring thoughts, and beate downe the fury of the temptations, which violently assault me. Fight strongly for me, and vanquish the evill beasts, that is the alluring concupiscences, that peace may be made in thy vertue, and abundance of thy praise sound in thy holy Court, which is a pure conscience. [a] Command the winds and tempe sts: say unto the sea: Be still: and to the north wind: Blowe not; and a great calme shall ensue.

5 [b] Send forth thy light, and thy truth, that they may shine upon the earth; for I am empty and unprofi-

a Matth. 8. b Psal. 42.

profitable earth, untill thou impartest thy light unto me. Poure out thy grace from above; wash my heart with heavenly dew; give water of devotion, to wash the face of the earth, to bring forth good and perfect fruit. Lift up my mind, overcharged with the weight of sinne: drawe up my whole desire to heavenly treasures, that having tasted the sweetnesse of celestiall happinesse, it may loath to thinke of earthly vanities.

6. Take me violently to thee, and deliver me from all unstable comfort of creatures: for no created thing can fully quiet and satisfie my desire. Joyne me unto thee with an unspeakable band of love: for thou onely fillest the minde of him that loves thee, and without thee all things are distastfull.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of flying curious inquiry of the life of others.

1 SOnne, [a] be not curious: trouble not thy selfe with idle cares. What is this or that to thee? doe thou followe me. [b] For what is it to thee, whether that man be such or no, or whether this man doe, or speake this or that? Thou shalt not neede to answer for others, but shalt give account of thy selfe. Why therefore doest thou trouble thy selfe. Behold I know every one what he is, and doe see all things that are under the sunne: and doe understand how it is with every one, what he thinkes, what he would, and at what his intention aymes. All things therefore are to be committed unto me: but doe thou keepe thy selfe in good peace, and suf-

fer

a Eccl. 3. 2. Tim. 5. b Iohn 21.

fer the unquiet to doe as they will. Whatsoever they shall have done, or said, shall fall upon themselves, for they cannot deceive me.

2 Desire not too great fame in this world, nor to be knowne to many, nor to have the private love of men: for these things breed distractions, and cause great darknesse of heart. I would willingly utter my words, and reveale my secrets unto thee, if thou didst diligently observe my comming: and dideſt open the doore of thy heart unto me Be carefull and watch in prayer, and humble thy selfe in all things.

CHAP. XXV.

Wherein does the firme peace of the heart, and true profit consist.

1 SOnne, I have said: a Peace I leave to you, my peace I give to you:

a Iohn 14.

you: not as the world giveth, doe I give to you. All doe desire peace, but all care not for those things that appertaine unto true peace. My peace is with the humble, and meeke of heart. Thy peace shall be in much patience. If thou wilt heare me and followe my voyce, thou mayest enjoy much peace. What then shall I doe? In every thing attend unto thy selfe what thou doest, and what thou sayest, and direct thy whole intention unto this, that thou mayest please me alone, and desire or seeke nothing out of me. Of the sayings and doings of others, judge nothing rashly; neither doe thou intangle thy selfe with things not committed unto thee: and doing thus, it may be thou shalt be little or seldome troubled.

2 But never to feele any trouble at all, nor to suffer any greife of

heart or body, is not the state of this life, but of everlasting rest. Thinke not therefore that thou hast found true peace, if thou feelest no sorrowe, nor that then all is well, if thou have no adversary: nor that it is perfect, if all things be done according to thy desire. Neither doe thou then esteeme highly of thy selfe, or imagine thy selfe to be especially beloved, if thou be in great devotion, and sweetnesse: for in these things a true lover of vertue is not tryed, neither doth the profit and perfection of man consist in having them.

Wherein then Lord? In offering thy selfe from the very bottome of thy heart, upon the divine service, not seeking thine owne interest or commodity, neither in great nor little, neither in time nor eternity: so that with equall countenance, thou mayest persist in thanksgiving,

ving, both in prosperity and in adversity, weighing all things with an equall balance. If thou be of such courage and so patient in hope, that when inward comfort is withdrawne from thee, thou prepare thy heart to suffer greater matters, and not justifie thy selfe, as though thou oughtest not to suffer these, and so great afflictions; but justifie me in whatsoever I appoint, and praise my holy name, then thou walkest in the true and right way of peace: and thou shalt have undoubted hope to see my face againe with great joy. And if thou attaine to the full contempt of thy selfe; then shalt thou enjoy as great aboundance of peace, as thy banishment may permit.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVI.

Of the excellency of a free minde, which humble prayer better deserves then reading.

LOrd, it is the worke of a perfect man, never to slacke his minde from the attentive thought of heavenly things, and as it were to passe without care through many cares: not faintingly, but with a certaine priviledge of a free minde, adhering by inordinate affection to no creature.

I beseech thee most mercifull God, preserve me from the cares of this life, least I should be too much intangled thereby: and from the many necessities of the body, least I should be enthralled by pleasure from all hinderances of the soule, least broken with troubles I should be dejected and disquayed. I meane not from those things

things that all worldly vanity so greatly desires: but from those miseries, that as punishments, do weigh downe and hinder the soule of thy servant, with the generall curse of mortality, [a] that it cannot enter into liberty of spirit, as often as it would.

3 O my God, the unspeakable sweetnesse, make bitter unto me all carnall comfort, which may draw me away from the love of everlasting happinesse, and wickedly allure me to it selfe with the force of a certaine present delight. Let not flesh and bloud overcome me. [b] Lord Let not the world and the short glory thereof deceive me. Let not the devill and his subtile fraude supplant me. Give me force to resist, patience to suffer, and constancy to persever. Give me infusion of all the comforts of the

[a] Rom. 7. [b] Rom. 2.

world the most sweete unction of thy spirit; and in lieu of carnall love, powre into my soule the love of thy name.

4 Behold, meate, drinke, cloathes, and other necessaries for the maintenance of the body, are burdensome unto a fervent spirit. Grant me to affect such nourishments in due measure, and not to be intangled with an over-great desire of them. It is not lawfull to renounce them wholy, for that nature is to be maintained: but to desire superfluities, and those things that doe rather delight, then sustaine, the holy Law forbiddes: for otherwise the flesh would rebell against the spirit. Herein I beseech thee, let thy hand gouverne me, and teach me, that I may not exceede.

Chap. XXVII.

The private love most hinders from the chiefest good.

1 SOnne, thou oughtest to give all for all, and to retaine nothing of thy selfe. Knowe that the love of thy selfe does hurt thee more, then any thing in the world. According to the love, and affection thou beareſt them, ſo does every thing cleave unto thee more or leſſe. If thy love be pure, ſimple, and well ordered, thou ſhalt be free from bondage. Covet not that which thou mayeſt not have. Be not willing to have that which may hinder thee and deprive thee of inward liberty. It is a wonderfull thing that thou committeſt not thy ſelfe wholy unto me, from the bottome of thy heart, with all things, that thou canſt deſire or have.

2 Why

a Matth. 6.

2 Why doest thou consume thy selfe with vaine greife? Why tyrest thou thy minde with needlesse cares? [b] Resigne thy selfe to me, and thou shalt feele no losse at all. If thou seekest this or that, and wouldest be here or there, to enjoy thine owne commodity and pleasure, thou shalt never be in quiet, nor free from trouble of minde; for in every thing somewhat will be wanting, and in every place there will be some that will crosse thee.

3 Not every externall thing therefore attained, and heaped together helpes thee: but it rather availes, if thou despise it, and doest route it out from thy heart, which thou must not understand onely of thy revenues and wealth, but of the desire of honour also, and vaine praise; all which doe passe away with this fading world. The place

b Exod. 8.

availes little, if the ſpirit of fervour be wanting: neither ſhall that peace which is ſought abroad long continue, if the ſtate of thy heart be deſtitue of a true foundation: that is, unleſſe thou perſiſt in me, thou mayeſt change, but not better thy ſelfe. For when occaſion does happen, thou ſhalt finde that which thou ſoughteſt to flye, and perhaps more.

A Prayer for cleanſing the heart, and obtaining of heavenly wiſdome.

4 [a] Confirme me Lord with the grace of thy holy ſpirit. Give me force to ſtrengthen my inward man and to purge my heart from all unprofitable care and greife, not to be [b] drawne away with ſundry deſires of any thing either little or great, but to conſider all things how they are tranſitory, and doe quickly

a Pſal. 50. b Matth. 6.

quickly fade, and that my selfe doe also passe away together with them: [a] for nothing is permanent under the sunne, where all things are vanity, and affliction of minde. O how wise is he that so considers them!

5 [b] Grant me Lord heavenly wisdome, that I may learne above all things to seeke and finde thee, above all things to delight in thee, and to love thee: and to thinke of all created things as they are, according to the disposition of thy wisdome. [c] Grant me prudently to avoyde him, that flatters me, and to suffer patiently him that contradicts me. It is great wisdome not to be moved with every blast of wordes: nor to give eare to dangerous flattery: for so we shall goe on securely in the way which we have begun.

a Eccl.1. b Sap.9. c Ephes.4.

Chap. XXVIII.

Againſt the tongue of ſlanderers.

1 SOnne, be not greived if ſome thinke evill of thee, and ſpeake that which thou doeſt not willingly heare. [a] Thou oughteſt to judge the worſt of thy ſelfe, and to thinke no man weaker then thy ſelfe. If thou walke according to ſpirit, thou wilt not much eſteeme of flying wordes. It is no ſmall wiſdome to be ſilent in time of evill, and inwardly to turne to me, and not to be troubled with the judgement of men.

2 Let not thy peace be in the tongues of men. For whether they judge well or evill, thou art nevertheleſſe alwayes the ſame. [b] Where is true peace, and true glory? Is it not in me? And he that covets not to pleaſe men, nor feares to diſ-

pleaſe

a 1. Cor. 4. b Iohn 7.

pleaſe them, ſhall enjoy much peace. From inordinate love and vaine feare ariſes all diſquiet of heart, and diſtraction of the ſenſes.

CHAP. XXIX.

How we ought to call upon God, and bleſſe him when tribulation drawes neare.

1 [a] BLeſſed (ô Lord) be thy name for ever: ſince it pleaſes thee that this temptation and tribulation ſhould fall upon me. I cannot fly it: but have neede to fly to thee, that thou mayeſt helpe me, and turne it to my good. Lord I am now afflicted, and it is not well with me, I am much troubled with this preſent greife. [b] And now, beloved Father, what ſhall I ſay? I am taken in narrowe ſtraits, ſave me in this houre: yea therefore I am fallen in this houre, that thou may-

a Iob 1. Pſal. 122. b Math. 26.

eſt be glorified, when I ſhall be greatly humbled, and by thee delivered. [a] Let it pleaſe thee Lord to deliver me: for poore wretch that I am, what can I doe, and whither ſhall I goe without thee? Grant patience Lord, even this time alſo. Helpe me my God, and then I will not feare how much ſoever I be oppreſſed.

2 And now in this, what ſhall I ſay? [b] Lord, thy will be done. I have well deſerved to be afflicted and greived. Surely I ought to beare it: and I would to God I might beare it with patience, untill the tempeſt be paſſed over, and it become calme. But thy omnipotent hand is able to take this temptation from me, and to aſſwage the violence thereof, that I utterly ſinke not under it, as oftentimes heretofore thou haſt done unto me, my

[a] Pſal. 39. [b] Matth. 6.

my Lord, my mercy. And how much the more hard it is to me, so much the more easy is this change of thy mighty hand to thee.

a Psal. 76.

CHAP. XXX.

Of craving the divine aide, and confidence of recovering grace.

1 SOnne, I am thy Lord, who doe use to give comfort in the day of tribulation. Come unto me when it is not well with thee. This is that which most of all hinders heavenly consolation, that thou art slowe in turning thy selfe unto prayer. For before thou doest earnestly commend thy selfe to me, thou seekest many comforts and delights thy selfe in outward things. And hence it proceeds

a Matth. 1.

that all does little profit thee, untill thou consider that I am he, that deliver those that trust in me: and that out of me there is neither powerfull helpe, nor profitable counsell, nor remedy that can continue. But now thou having recovered breath after the tempest, gather strength againe in the light of my mercies: for I am at hand sayes our Lord, to repaire all, not onely entirely, but also abundantly.

2. Is there any thing hard to me? or am I like unto him that promises and performes not? [a] Where is thy faith? Be firme and constant. Take courage and be patient, comfort will be given thee in due time. Attend me, expect, I will come and cure thee. It is a temptation that vexes thee: and a vaine feare that affrightes thee. [b] What else

a Math. 23. b Math. 6.

elſe does the care for future incertainties bring thee, but ſorrowe upon ſorrowe? Sufficient for the day is the evill thereof. It is a vaine and unprofitable thing to be greived, or to rejoyce for future things, that perhaps will never happen.

3 But it is incident to man, to be deluded with ſuch imaginations: and a ſigne of little courage to be ſo eaſily drawne away by the ſuggeſtion of the enemy. For he cares not ſo he delude and deceive thee, whether it be true or falſe which he propoſes: a whether he overthrowe thee with the love of preſent, or the feare of future things. Let not therefore thy heart be troubled, neither doe thou feare. Believe in me and put thy truſt in my mercy. When thou thinkeſt thy ſelfe furthereſt of from me, often-

a Pſal. 60.

oftentimes I am neareſt unto thee. When thou judgeſt that almoſt all is loſt, then oftentimes greater gaine of merit is at hand. All is not loſt when any thing falls out contrary unto thee. Thou muſt not judge according to that which thou feeleſt for the preſent: nor give thy ſelfe over to any greife from whence ſoever it comes, as though all hope of delivery were quite gone.

4 Thinke not thy ſelfe wholy left, although for a time I have ſent thee ſome tribulation, or withdrawne thy deſired comfort: for this is the way to the Kingdome of heaven. And without doubt it is more expedient for thee, and the reſt of my ſervants, that ye be exerciſed with many adverſities, then that ye ſhould have all things according to your deſires. I know the ſecret thoughts of thy heart, and

and that it is very expedient for thy soules health, that thou be left sometimes without taste and feeling of spirituall sweetnesse, least perhaps thou shouldest be puffed up with good successe, and shouldest please thy selfe in that which thou art not. [a] That which I have given, I can take away, and restore it againe when I please.

5 When I give it, it is mine: when I withdrawe it, I take not any thing that is thine: for mine is every good, and every perfect gift. If I send thee affliction, or any crosse whatsoever, repine not, nor be not dismayed I can quickly lift thee up againe, and turne all thy sorrowe into joy. Nevertheless I am just, and greatly to be praised, when I doe all this unto thee.

6 If thou be wise, and consider

[a] Iacob. 1.

der well thy case, thou wilt neve
yeild so cowardly to greife, for a
ny adversity that befalls thee, bu
rather rejoyce and give thanks: yc
to account this thy onely joy, tha
afflicting thee with sorrowes, I doe
not spare thee. a As my Father hath
loved me, I also love you, said I un-
to my beloved Disciples, whom
certainly I sent not to temporal
joyes, but to great conflicts: not to
honours, but to contempts: not to
idlenesse, but to labours: not to
rest, but to bring much fruit in pa-
tience. My sonne, remember these
wordes.

a Iohn 15.

CHAP. XXXI.

Of the contempt of all creatures to finde our Creatour.

1 LOrd, I stand yet in neede of great grace, if I must goe so farre as that no man or creature

can

can hinder me. For as long as any thing holdes me, I cannot flye freely unto thee. He desires to flye with great liberty that said,[a] Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will flye and rest? What thing more quiet then a simple eye? And what more free, then he that desires nothing upon earth? Man ought therefore to ascend above all creatures, and perfectly to forsake himselfe, and to remaine in excesse of minde: and consider that thou, who art the maker of all things, hast nothing amongst creatures like unto thee. And unlesse a man be free from the affection of all creatures, he cannot with freedome of minde attend unto divine things. And for this case there are so fewe contemplative men to be found; for that fewe can wholy sequester themselves from fading creatures.

2 Much

[a] Psal. 54.

2 Much grace is necessary to lift up a soule, and to carry it above it selfe. And unlesse a man be lifted up in spirit, and delivered from all creatures, and wholy united unto God: whatsoever he knowes, and whatsoever he hath, is of little account compt. Long shall he be little, and lye in earthly baseneſſe, that esteemes any thing great, but the one unmeasurable and eternall good. For whatsoever is not God is nothing, and ought to be accounted as nothing. There is great difference betweene the wisdome of a spirituall and devout person, and the knowledge of a learned and studious Clarke. Farre more noble is that learning which flowes from above, from the divine influence, then that which is painfully gotten by the wit of man.

3 There are many that desire contemplation, but they endeavour

not to exercise those things that are required thereunto. It is a great hinderance that we rest in signes and sensible things, and have little true mortification. I knowe not what it is, nor by what spirit we are led, nor what we pretend, we that seeme to be called spirituall, that we take so much paines, and so great care for transitory and base things, and scarce or seldome thinke of our owne inward profit, with full recollection of our senses.

4 Alas, presently after a sleight recollection, we breake forth: and weigh not our workes with diligent examination. We minde not where our affections lye: nor bewaile the impurity and many faults that are in all our actions. [a] For al flesh had corrupted her way, and therefore did that generall floud ensue. Sith our inward affection

a Gen. 6. 7.

then is much corrupted, it must needes be that our action proceeding thereof, be corrupted, as a ſigne of the want of inward vigour. From a pure heart proceeds the fruit of good life.

5 We aske how much one hath done: but how vertuous his actions are, is not ſo diligently conſidered. We inquire whether he be ſtrong, rich, beautifull, handſome, a good writer, a good ſinger, or a good labourer: but how poore he is in ſpirit, how patient, and meeke, how devout and ſpirituall, is ſeldome ſpoken of. Nature reſpects outward things, grace turns her ſelfe to the inward vertues. That is often deceived: this hath her truſt in God, to the end ſhe be not deceived.

Chap. XXXII.

Of the denial of our selves, and forsaking all our affections.

1 SOnne, thou canst not possesse perfect liberty, unlesse thou wholy deny thy selfe. All such as be lovers of themselves are bound in fetters, they are coveteous, curious, wanderers, seekers of ease, and not of those things that appertaine to Jesus Christ; but oftentimes devising, and framing that which will not continue. For all shall perish that proceeds not from God Keepe this short and compleat word. Forsake all, and thou shalt finde all. Leave thy inordinate desires, and thou shalt finde rest. Consider this well: and when thou hast fulfilled it, thou shalt understand all.

2 Lord, this is not one dayes

a Matth 16.19.

worke, nor childrens ſport: yea in this ſhort ſentence all the perfection of religious perſons is included. Sonne, thou muſt not goe backe, nor ſtraitwayes be dejected, when thou heareſt the way of the perfect; but rather be ſtirred up to more worthy and noble attempts, or at leaſt to conceive an earneſt deſire thereof. I would it were ſo well with thee, and thou wert come ſo farre, that thou wert no longer a lover of thy ſelfe, but didſt ſtand meerely at my beck, and at his whom I have appointed a father over thee: then thou ſhouldeſt exceedingly pleaſe me, and all thy life would paſſe away in joy and peace. Thou haſt yet many things to forſake, which unleſſe thou wholy reſigne over unto me, thou ſha't not attaine to that which thou deſireſt. [a] I counſell thee to buy of me

[a] Apoc. 3.

me purified gold, that thou mayest become rich, that is heavenly wisdome, which treads under foot all base and earthly things. Set little by the wisdome of this world, and esteeme not of the contentment of men, nor thine owne fancies.

3 I said, that thou shouldest buy the meane and base things with the precious, and those that were with men of great esteeme. For true heavenly wisdome seemes very base, and of small account, and is scarce thought of by men: for that esteemes not highly of it selfe, nor seekes to be magnified upon earth, which may praise from the teeth outward, but in their life they are farre from it: [a] yet is it the precious pearle which is hidden from many.

a Math. 17.

Chap. XXXIII.

Of inconſtancy of heart, & of directing our finall intentions unto God.

1 SOnne, a truſt not to thy affection: that which now is, will quickly change into another. As long as thou liveſt thou art ſubject to mutability, even againſt thy will: ſo that now thou art merry, now ſad, now quiet, now troubled, now devout, now diſtracted, now diligent, now idle, now heavy, now light. But he that is wiſe, and well inſtructed in ſpirit, remaines alwayes one in the middeſt of theſe changes, not heeding what he ſeekes in himſelfe, or which way the winde of mutability blowes: but that the whole intention of his minde, may tend as it ought, to the moſt perfect and beſt end. For ſo he may continue one, and the ſelfe

a Iob 14.

selfe same, without any change in the midst of so many sundry chances, directing alwayes the sincere eye of his intention unto me.

2 [a] And how much purer the eye of the intention is, so much the more constantly does he passe through the variety of many contrary waves. But in many things the eye of a sincere intention waxeth blinde, for it quickly lookes upon some delight, some object that occurres. And it is rare to finde one that is wholy free from al blemish of seeking himselfe. So the Jewes in times past came into [b] Bethania to Martha and Mary, not for Jesus alone, but to see Lazarus also. [c] The eye of our intention therefore, is to be purged, that it may be sincere and pure, and to be directed unto me, neglecting the multitude and variety of earthly objects.

a Matth 6. b Iohn 12. c Matth 6.

Chap. XXXIV.

That God is ſweet above all things, and in all things to him that loves.

1 BEhold my God, and all things! What would I have more, and what can I deſire more happy? O ſweet and comfortable word! but to him that loves the word, not the world, nor thoſe things that are in the world. My God, and all things! Enough is ſaid to him that underſtandes, and it is pleaſant to him that loves, to repeat it often. For when thou art preſent, all things doe yeild delight, but when thou art abſent, all becomes irkſome. Thou giveſt quiet of heart and much peace, and pleaſant joy. Thou makeſt men thinke well of all, and praiſe thee in all things: neither can any thing pleaſe us long without thee: but if it be pleaſant and delightſome, thy grace

must

must be present, and it must be seasoned with the sweetnesse of thy wisdome.

2 What can be distastfull unto him, to whom thou art pleasing? And whom thou delightest not, what can be pleasant? But the wise of the world, and that have their contentment in sensuall things, cannot attaine to thy wisdome, for in the world is much vanity, and in the flesh is death. [b] But they that followe thee by the contempt of worldly things, and mortification of the flesh, are proved to be truly wise; for they are changed from vanity to truth, from flesh to spirit. To these God is sweet, and what good soever is found in creatures, they wholy referre unto the praise of their maker. Notwithstanding great, yea very great is the difference betweene the sweet-

a Rom. 8. b 1. Iohn 2.

neſſe of the Creatour, and of the creature, of eternity and of time, of uncreated and created light.

3 O everlaſting light, ſurpaſſing all created lights, caſt forth the beames of thy brightneſſe from above, and peirce the moſt inward corners of my heart: purifie, rejoyce, clarifie and quicken my ſpirit with all the powers thereof, that I may cleave unto thee with exces of unſpeakable joy. O when will that bleſſed and deſired houre come, that I may be filled with thy preſence, and thou mayeſt be unto me all, in all things: as long as this is not granted me, I ſhall not have full nor perfect joy. Alas! *my old man yet lives in me, he is not wholy crucified, he is not perfectly dead. He does yet covet ſtrongly againſt the ſpirit, and moves civill warres, and ſuffers not the

a Rom. 7.

the kingdome of my soule to be in peace.

4 [a] But thou that rulest the powers of the sea, and asswagest the motions of the waves, rise and helpe me: dissipate the people that desire warre, and destroy them in thy might, and let thy hand be glorified: for there is no hope nor refuge for me, but in thee, my Lord God.

a Psal. 65, 88 89. 90.

CHAP. XXXV.

That there is no security from temptation in this life.

1 SOnne, there is no security in this life: [a] as long as thou livest thou shalt alwayes have neede of spirituall armour. Thou livest among enemies, and art assaulted on all sides: if therefore thou defendest not thy selfe on every side with the shielde of patience, thou canst

a Iob 7. 1. Cor 6.

canst not be long unwounded. Moreover if thou fixe not thy heart on me with a sincere will to suffer all things for me, thou canst not sustaine the heat of this battaile, nor get that victorious crowne which they have that are in glory. Thou oughtest therefore manfully to goe through all, and to use a strong hand against whatsoever withstands thee. For to him that overcomes is given Manna, and to the negligent is left much woe.

2 If thou seekest rest in this world, how wilt thou then attaine to everlasting rest? Give not thy selfe to much ease, but to much patience. Seeke true peace, not in earth, but in heaven; not in men, nor in any creature, but in God alone. Thou oughtest for the love of God willingly to undergoe labours, to endure greifs, temptations, vexations, anxieties,

ieties, necessities, infirmities, injures, detractions, reprehensions, humiliations, confusions, corrections, and contempts: these helpe to the attaining of vertue; these trye a Novice of Christ: these make a heavenly crowne. I will give an everlasting reward for a short labour, and infinite glory for transitory confusion.

3 Thinkest thou, that thou shalt alwayes have spirituall consolations at will. My Saints had not so, but many afflictions, and sundry temptations, and many discomforts: all which they endured patiently, and trusted rather in God, then in themselves: [a] knowing that the sufferings of his time are not condigne to the deserving of future glory. Wilt thou have that straightwayes, which many after teares, & great labours have hardly obtai-

a Rom. 8.

obtained? [a] Expect the comming of thy Lord, doe manfully, be of good courage: feare not, doe not flye, but offer both body and soule for the glory of God I will reward thee in the most plentifull manner, and I will be with thee in all thy tribulations.

a Psal 26.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Against the vaine judgements of men.

1 SOnne, fixe thy heart stedfastly on God, and feare not the judgements of men, when thy conscience gives testimony of thy justice and innocency. It is a good and a happy thing to suffer in that sort, neither will it be burdensome to an humble minde, nor to him that trusts rather in God, then in himselfe. The most part of men are given to talke much, and therefore little care is to be had of their

their wordes: neither is it possible to satisfie all. a Though the Apostle endeavour to please all in our Lord, and made himselfe all unto all, yet he little regarded that he was judged by humane day.

2 He did for the edification and health of others, as much as he could, and lay in him: yet could he not hinder, but that he was sometimes judged, and despised by others. Therefore he committed all to God, who knew all, and defended himselfe with patience, and humility against evill tongues, and such as thought vanities and lyes, and spake what listed. b Yet sometimes notwithstanding he answered, least the weake might have received scandall by his silence.

3 Who art thou that feareſt a mortall man? to day he is, and to mor-

row

a 1. Cor. 9. 2. Cor. 4 Col. 2. b Act. 16. Phil. 1.

row he is not seene. [a] Feare God and the terrour of men shall not trouble thee. What harme can the wordes or injuries of any doe thee? he rather hurtes himselfe then thee: neither can he avoyde the judgements of God, be he what he will. [b] Have thou God before thine eyes and contend not with complaining wordes. And if for the present thou seemest to be troaden downe and to suffer shame and confusion without desert, doe not repine neither doe thou lessen thy crowne by thy impatience; [c] but rather lift up thine eyes to me in heaven, I am able to deliver thee from all shame and wrong, and to repaye every one according to their workes.

a Mar. 3. b Rom. 12. 1. Cor. 12. c Hebr. 12.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Of a full and pure resignation of our selves for the obtaining freedome of heart.

SOnne leave thy selfe, and thou shalt finde me. Make choice of nothing, appropriate nothing to thy selfe, and thou shalt ever gaine. [a] For greater grace shall alwayes be given thee, when thou doest perfectly resigne thy selfe, and not turne backe to take thy selfe againe. Lord, how often shall I resigne my selfe? and wherein shall I forsake my selfe? Alwayes, and in every thing, as well in little as in great. I doe except nothing, but doe require that thou be as is, were naked and voyde of all things. Otherwise, how canst thou be perfectly mine, and I thine, unlesse both within and without thou be from all selfe-will?

a Matth. 16.

And how much the ſooner thou doeſt this, ſo much the better thou finde thy ſelfe; and how much the more fully and ſincerely thou doe it, ſo much the more ſhalt thou pleaſe me, and ſo much the more ſhalt thou gaine.

2 Some there are that reſigne themſelves, but with ſome exception. For they put not their whole truſt in God, and therefore doe labour to provide for themſelves. Some alſo at the firſt doe offer all, but afterwards being aſſailed with temptations, doe returne againe to that which they had left, and therefore they goe not forwards in the way of vertue. Theſe ſhall not attaine to the true liberty of a pure heart, nor to the grace of my divine familiarity, unleſſe they firſt make an entire reſignation, and offer themſelves a dayly ſacrifice unto me. For without this can never

be obtained the union with me, wherewith my Saints enjoy me.

I have often said unto thee, and now againe I say the same: Forsake thy selfe, resigne thy selfe, and thou shalt enjoy internall peace. Give all for all, seeke nothing, require nothing, repose thy selfe purely and with a full confidence in me, and I will give my selfe unto thee, and darknesse shall not cover thee. Let this be thy whole endeavour, let this be thy prayer, let this be thy desire, that casting of all propriety, thou mayest all naked followe thy naked Saviour Jesus: and dying to thy selfe, mayest live eternally to me. Then shall vaine fancies, evill perturbations, and all superfluous cares flye away; then shall immoderate feare leave thee, and inordinate love shall dye.

Chap. XXXVIII.

Of good gouvernement in outward things, and of recourse to God in dangers.

1 SOnne, thou oughteſt with all diligence to procure, that in every place and action, or externall buſineſſe, thou be inwardly free, and maſter of thy ſelfe, and that all things be under thy diſpoſition, and thou not ſubject to them; that thou mayſt be Lord and maſter of thy actions, not a ſervant or a hireling, but rather a freeman, and a true Hebrew, belonging to the lot and freedome of the ſonnes of God, who put the things that are preſent under their feete, and place their thoughts on that which is eternall; who looke on tranſitory things with the left eye, and with the right doe behold the things of heaven: who ſuffer not to them-

ſelves

ſelves to be drawne to cleave unto them, but rather diſpoſe and uſe them, as they are ordained by God, and appointed by the Creatour of all, who hath left nothing in his creatures without due order.

2 If thou remaine ſtirne and ſtedfaſt in all events, and doeſt not weigh by the outward apparence, nor with a carnall eye, the things which thou ſeeſt and heareſt: but preſently in every occaſion doeſt enter with [a] Moyſes into the Tabernacle to aske counſell of our Lord, thou ſhalt ſometimes heare the divine and celeſtiall oracle, and ſhalt returne inſtructed of many things both preſent and to come. [b] Moyſes had alwayes recourſe to the Tabernacle for the deciding of all doubts, and obſcure queſtions, and fled to the helpe of prayer, for the remedy of the iniquity and

a Exod. 32. b Num. 9.

dangers of men. So oughtest thou in like manner to flye to the close of thy heart, earnestly craving the divine favour. For the Scripture testifies, [a] that therefore was Josue and the children of Israel deceived by the Gabaonites, because they consulted not first with God, but giving too lightly credit to faire wordes, were deluded with counterfait piety.

a Num 9.

CHAP. XXXIX.

That a man be not over earneſt in his affaires.

1 SOnne, alwayes commit thy cause to me, I will dispose well of it in due time, expect my ordinance, and thou shalt finde it will be for thy good. Lord, I doe most willingly commit all unto thee, for my care can profit little. O that I cleaved not too much to future

events,

events, but offered my selfe with all readinesse of minde to thy divine pleasure!

2 Sonne, oftentimes a man does earnestly labour for that which he desires, and when he hath gotten it, he beginnes to be of another minde, and not to esteeme so much of it, as before he did: for mans affections doe not long continue fixed on one thing, but doe passe from one to another. It is therefore a matter, not of least moment, to forsake our selves even in the least things.

3 The true spirituall profit of man, consists in denying and forsaking of himselfe: [a] and he that is resigned, lives in great freedome and security. But the ancient enemy, who alwayes laboures to withstand the servants of God, omits at no time his wonted temptations,

a 2. Pet. 3.

but day and night lyes ſtill in waite, to caſt the unwary, if he can, into the ſnare of deceipt. Watch therefore and pray, ſayes our Lord, that you enter not into temptation.

CHAP. XL.

That man hath no good of himſelfe, nor any thing whereof he can glory.

1 LOrd, what is man, that thou art mindfull of him, or the ſonne of man, that thou vouchſafeſt to viſit him? What hath man deſerved that thou ſhouldeſt give him thy grace? Lord, what cauſe have I to complaine, if thou forſake me? or if thou doeſt not that which I deſire, what can I juſtly ſay againſt it? Surely, this I may truly thinke and ſay: Lord, I am nothing, I can doe nothing, I have nothing that is good of my ſelfe: but in all things I doe faile, and am defecti-

ve,

a Pſal. 8.

ve, and doe ever tende to nothing: and unleſſe thou helpe me, and doeſt interiourly inſtruct me, I become cold, and am diſſolved.

2 [a]But thou, ô Lord, art alwayes the ſame, and endureſt for ever, alwayes good, juſt, and holy, doing all things well, juſtly, and holily, and diſpoſing all things with wiſdome. But I that am more inclined to fall, then to goe forwards, doe never continue in one ſtate: for ſeven different times are changed over me. Yet does it ſoone turne to the better, when it ſo pleaſes thee, and when thou vouchſafeſt to ſtretch forth thy helping hand. For thou alone canſt helpe me without the favour of man, and ſo ſtrengthen me, that my countenance ſhall be no more changed, but my heart ſhall be converted, and reſt in thee alone.

a Pſal. 10.

3 Wherefore if I could once perfectly forſake all humane comfort, either for the love of devotion, or for mine owne neceſſity, which inforces me to ſeeke after thee (for none elſe can comfort me) then might I well hope in thy grace, and rejoyce in the gift of new conſolation.

4 Thankes be unto thee, from whence all proceeds, as often as it goes well with me: but I am meere vanity, and nothing before thee, an unconſtant and weake man. Whereof then can I glory? Or why doe I deſire to be eſteemed what for nothing? And this is moſt vaine. Truly, vaine glory is an evill plague, and very great vanity, becauſe it drawes from true glory, and robbes the ſoule of heavenly grace. For whileſt a man pleaſes himſelfe, he diſpleaſes thee: whileſt he gapes after the praiſe of men,

men, he is deprived of true vertue.

5 [a] But true glory, and holy exultation, and joy, is for a man to glory in thee, and not in himselfe, [b] to rejoyce in thy name, and not in his owne vertue, nor to delight in any creature, but for thee. Praised be thy name, not mine: magnified be thy worke, not mine: let thy holy name be for ever blessed, but to me let no part of mens praises be given. Thou art my glory, thou art the joy of my heart. In thee will I glory and rejoyce all the day; but for my selfe I will not joy, but in my infirmities.

6 [c] Let the Jewes seeke the glory, which one man gives to another: I will desire this, which is from God alone. For all humane glory, all temporall honour, all worldly highnesse, compared to thy eternall glory, is vanity and folly.

a Abac. 3. b Psal. 112. and 113. c Iohn 5.

folly. O my truth, my mercy, my God, most blessed Trinity, to thee alone be all praise, honour, vertue, and glory for all eternity.

Chap. XLI.

Of the contempt of all temporall honours.

1 SOnne, trouble not thy selfe, if thou seest others honoured and advanced, and thy selfe contemned and debased. Lift up thy heart unto me in heaven, and the contempt of men in earth will not greive thee. Lord, we are blinde, and quickly seduced with vanity. If I looke well into my selfe, I cannot say, that any creature hath done me wrong, and therefore I cannot justly complaine of thee

2 But because I have often and greivously sinned against thee, all creatures doe justly take armes against me: for shame and contempt

is due unto me, but unto thee praise, honour, and glory. And unlesse I doe so prepare my selfe, that I be willing, and doe rejoyce to be despised and forsaken of all creatures, and to be esteemed nothing at all, I cannot obtaine internall strength and peace, nor be spiritually enlightned, nor wholy united unto thee.

CHAP. XLII.

That our peace is not to be placed in men.

IF Onne, if the peace thou hast with any, be grounded on the opinion which thou hast of him, or on the contentment thou receivest in his company, thou shalt ever be unconstant and subject to disquiet: but if thou have recourse unto the ever living and eternall Truth, a freind going from thee, or dying, shall not greive thee. The love of thy

thy freind ought to rest in me, and for me is he to be beloved, whosoever he be, whom thou thinkest well of, and is verily deare unto thee in this life. No freindship can availe, or continue without me; neither is the love true and pure, which they have, whose hearts are not joyned together by me. Thou oughtest to be so dead to such affections of beloved freinds, that (forasmuch as appertaines unto thee) thou shouldest wish to be without all company of men. Man approaches so much the nearer unto God, how much the further off he departs from all earthly comfort: so much the higher also he ascends unto God, by how much the lower he descends into himselfe, and how much the baser he is in his owne conceipt.

2 But he that attributes any good unto himselfe, hinders the coming of

of Gods grace unto him. [a] For the grace of the holy Ghost ever seekes an humble heart. If thou couldest perfectly annihilate thy selfe, and purge thy selfe of all created love, then should there flowe into thee great abundance of my grace. When thou casteſt thy eyes on creatures, the sight of thy Creatour is taken from thee. Learne to overcome thy selfe in all things, for the love of thy Creatour, and then shalt thou be able to attaine to heavenly knowledge. How little soever it be, if it be inordinately loved and regarded, it defiles the soule, and hinders the enjoying of the cheifest good.

a 1. Per.

CHAP. XLIII.

Against vaine and secular knowledge.

1 SOnne, let not the faire speeches, and subtile sayings of men

men move thee. For the king-
dome of God consists not in wo-
des, but in vertue. Observe well th
wordes which I speake: for they in
flame the heart, and enlighten th
minde, induce compunction, an
bring sundry comforts. Doe thou
never read to shewe thy selfe lear-
ned or wise: but labour to morti-
fie thy vices. for that will profi
thee more, then the knowledge o
many hard and difficult questions
2 When thou shalt have read an
knowne many things, thou ought
test ever to returne to one begin-
ning. I am he, that teacheth man
all knowledge, and doe give to
little ones a more cleare under-
standing, then can be taught by
man. He therefore, to whom I
speake, shall quickly be wise; and
shall profit much in spirit Woe be
to them, that inquire many curious
things

things of men, and doe little desire to knowe the way how to serve me. The time will come, when the Maister of Maisters shall appeare, Christ the Lord of Angels, to heare the lessons of all, that is, to examine the consciences of every one; and then * he will search Hierusalem with a candle, and the hidden things of darknesse shall be laid open, and the inventions of tongues shall be silent.

I am he that in an instant doe raise up the humble minde, to understand more reasons of the everlasting truth, then can be gotten by ten yeares study in schools. I teach without noise of words, without confusion of opinions, without ambition of honour, without contention of arguments, I am he that teaches to despise earthly things, to loath things present, to seeke

T the

* Soph. 1. 1. Cor. 4.

the everlasting, to delight in the things that are eternall, to flye honours, to suffer scandalls, to place all hope in me, to desire nothing out of me, and above all things fervently to love me.

For one by loving me entirely learned divine things, and spake wonders: he profited more in forsaking all things, then in studying subtilties. To some I speake ordinary things; to others, things more especiall; to some I appeare sweetly in signes and figures, but to some I reveale mysteries with much light. The voice of books is one, but it teaches not all men alike. For I am an internall teacher, I am the truth, the searcher of the heart, the understander of thoughts, the setter forwards of good workes, distributing to every one according to my will.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLIV.

Of not drawing outward things to our selves.

1 SOnne, in many things thou oughtest to be ignorant, and esteeme thy selfe as dead upon earth, and as one to whom the world is crucified. Thou must also passe over many things with a deafe eare, and rather thinke of that which appertaines to thy peace. It is more profitable to turne thine eyes from the sight of unpleasing things, and to leave unto every one his owne opinion, then to strive with contentious words. If thou standest well with God, and considerest his judgements, thou shalt the more easily yeilde to the will of others.

2 O Lord, to what an estate are we come! Behold, we bewaile a

a Gala. 6.

temporall losse, and for a little gaine we toyle and spare no labour, and the spirituall domage of our soule is forgotten, and hardly at length called to minde. That which little or nothing profites, is alwayes remembred, and that which is cheifly necessary, is negligently passed over, because mans nature carryes him to externall things; and unlesse he quickly returne unto himselfe, he lyes drowned in them with delight.

Chap. XLV.

That credit is not to be given to all men: and how prone man is to offend in words.

1 Help me, Lord, in my tribulation, for vaine is the defence of man. How often have I beene deceived, finding want of faith, where I thought it sure! And how often

a Psal. 59.

often have I found faith, where I least expected it? It is vaine therefore to trust in men: but the safety of the just, ô Lord, is in thee. Blessed be thou my God, in all things that befall us. We are weake and inconstant: quickly deceived, and soone changed.

2 Who is he, that is able so warily to keepe himselfe, that [a] he never fall into any deceipt or doubt? But he that trusts in thee, ô Lord, and seekes thee with a pure heart, does not easily fall: and if he falls into any tribulation, be he never so much inthralled, yet he shall quickly be delivered or comforted by thee. For thou wilt not forsake him for ever that trusts in thee. The freind is rare to be found, that continues faithfull in his freinds distresse: but thou, ô Lord, thou alone art faithfull at all times, and

[a] Prov. 20.

there is none like unto thee.

O how wise was that holy soule that said: My minde is firmely setled and grounded in Christ: If it were so with me, then would not humane feare so easily trouble me, nor words move me. Who can foresee all things? Who is able to beware beforehand of future evills? If things even foreseene doe oftentimes hurt us, how can things unlooked for choose but wounde us greivously? But why did I not provide better for my selfe, miserable wretch? Why also have I so easily given credit to others? But alas, we are men, and God knows we are weake and fraile men, although by many we are reputed and called Angels. To whom shall I give credit, Lord? to whom but to thee? Thou art the Truth that neither deceiveth nor can be deceived. And on the other side, every man

man is a lyar, weake, unconstant, and subject to fall, especially in words, and therefore we must not easily give credit even to that, which in outward shewe seemes at the first a certaine truth.

[a] O with how great wisdome hast thou warned us to take heede of men? [b] and because the enemies of man are his familiar and domesticall acquaintance, nor to trust, if one should say: Behold here, or behold there, I am taught to my cost, and I would to God I might thereby increase my care, and not my folly. Beware, sayes one, beware, keepe unto thy selfe what I tell thee: and whilest I hold my peace, and thinke it is secret, he cannot keep that secret, which he desired should be secret, but presently discloses me and himselfe, and goes his way. From such tales, and such

a Psal 115. b Matth. 10. Luc. 15.

improvident people, protect me Lord, that I fall not into their hands, nor ever commit such errours. Give me grace my God to observe truth and constancy in my words, and remove farre from me a deceiptfull tongue. What I am not willing to suffer, I ought by all meanes to avoid.

5 [a] O how good and quiet a thing it is to be silent, and not to talke of others, nor to beleeve all that is said, nor easily to report what we have heard, to lay ones selfe open to few, always to seeke after thee the beholder of the heart: not to be carried about with every wind of wordes, but to desire that all things both within and without, be accomplished according to thy will and pleasure. How secure is it for the keeping of heavenly grace, to fly the sight of men: and not to seeke

a Prov. 17.

seeke those things, that seeme to cause admiration abroad; but to follow that with all diligence, which brings amendment of life, and increase of fervour.

To how many hath vertue, knowne and over hastily commended, beene hurtfull? How profitable hath grace beene, kept with silence in this mortall life, which is nothing but a perpetuall temptation, and a warfare?

[a] Iob 7.

CHAP. XLVI.

Of putting our trust in God, when evill words arise.

SOnne, be constant, and put thy trust in me. For what are words, but words? They passe through the ayre, [a] but hurt not. If thou be guilty, determine willingly to amend thy selfe: if thou be innocent, resolve to suffer this willingly

[a] Psal 32.

lingly at least for God. It is a small matter to suffer sometimes a few wordes, if thou hast not yet the courage to endure stripes. And why doe small matters goe to thy heart, but for that thou art yet carnall, and regardest men more then thou oughtest? Because thou art afraid to be despised, therefore thou wilt not be reprehended for thy faults, and therefore seekest shaddowes of excuses.

2 But looke better unto thy selfe, and thou shalt see that the world yet lives in thee, and a vaine desire to please men. For when thou refusest to be humbled, and reproved for thy faults, it is surely evident, that thou art neither truly humble, nor dead to the world, nor the world perfectly crucified to thee. But give diligent care to my words, and thou shalt little respect ten thousand wordes spoken by

men.

men. Behold, if all should be spoken against thee that could be most maliciously invented, what would it [a] hurt thee, if thou sufferedst it, to passe, and madest no reckoning at all of it? Could all those wordes pluck as much as one hair from thy head?

3 But he that hath not his heart within him, nor God before his eyes, is easily moved with every little dispraise; [b] when as he that trustes in me, and confides not in his owne judgement, shall be free from humane feares. For I am the Judge and discerner of all secrets, I knowe how the matter passed, I knowe him that offers the injury, and him that suffers it. From me hath this word proceeded, this hath happened by my permission, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed. I shall judge the guilty

a Math. 10 Luc. 11. b Psal. 72. 2 Luc. 2.

guilty and the innocent; but by secret judgement I would before hand try them both.

4 The testimony of men oftentimes deceives: my judgement is alwayes true, it shall stand and not be overthrowne. It is commonly hidden and secret, and not known in every thing but to few; notwithstandingh it never erres, neither can it erre, although to the eyes of the foolish it seemes not right. Man ought therefore to [a] returne to me in every judgement, and not to stand in their owne opinions. For the just man will not be troubled, whatsoever happens unto him for God: and if any thing be wrongfully brought forth against him, he will not much care, neither will he vainely be glad, if by others he be with reason excused. For he considers that I am he, that

that searches the heart and reines, and doe judge, not according to the outward face, nor humane apparence. For that is oftentimes found coulpable in my sight, that in the judgement of men is commendable.

5 O Lord my God, the just Judge, strong and patient, thou knowest the frailty and perversity of man, be thou my strength, and all my truth, for mine owne conscience suffises me not. Thou knowest that which I cannot reach unto, and therefore in every reprehension I ought to have borne it patiently; vouchsafe mercifully to pardon me, as often as I have failed herein, and give me againe grace of greater sufferance. For thy bountifull mercy is more avayla-ble to me for the obtaining of pardon, then my conceived justice for

5 Apoc. 7. Psal. 8.

for the defence of my hidden conscience. Although my conscience accuse me not, yet I cannot hereby justifie my selfe: for if thy mercy be away, no man living shall be justified in thy sight.

a Psal. 124. 1 Cor. 4.

CHAP. XLVII.

That all greivous things are to be endured for life everlasting.

1. SOnne, let not the paines dismay thee, which thou hast undertaken for me, neither be thou discomforted for the tribulations which doe befall thee, but let my promise strengthen and comfort thee in all events. I am able to reward thee above all measure. Thou shalt not long toyle here, nor alwayes be oppressed with greife. Attend a while, and thou shalt see a speedy end of thy evils. There will come an houre when all

all labour, and trouble shall cease. Little and short is all that passes away with time.

2 Doe as thou doest, [a] labour faithfully in my vineyard, I will be thy reward. Write, read, sing, mourne, observe silence, pray, suffer crosses manfully: life everlasting is worthy of all these and greater combats. Peace shall come in the day which is knowne unto our Lord, and it shall not be day nor night, to wit, of this time, but everlasting light, infinite brightnesse, stedfast peace, and secure rest. Then thou shalt not say, [b] Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? nor cry, [c] Woe be unto me, for that my dwelling in a strange countrey is prolonged! For death shall be throwne downe, and health shall be without decay, no anxiety, blessed joy, sweet and glorious company.

[a] Matth. 20. [b] Rom. 7. [c] Psal. 119.

3 If thou hadst seene the everlasting crownes of the Saints in heaven, and with how great glory they now rejoyce who in times past were contemptible to the world, and esteemed unworthy of life it selfe: truely thou wouldest presently humble thy selfe even unto the earth: and wouldest rather seeke to be under the feete of all, then to have command, or so much as over one; neither wouldest thou desire pleasant dayes of this life, but rather rejoyce to be afflicted for God, and esteeme it thy greatest gaine to be reputed as nothing amongst men.

4 O if thou hadst a feeling of these things, and didst suffer them to enter into the depth of thy heart, how durst thou so much as once to complaine! Are not all painfull labours to be endured for ever.

a Sap. 5. 3.

everlasting life? It is no small matter to loose or to gaine the Kingdome of heaven. Lift up thine eyes therefore unto heaven: beehold I, and all my Saints with me who in this world had great conflicts, doe now rejoyce, now are comforted, now are secure, now doe rest, and shall remaine with me everlastingly in the Kingdome of my Father.

CHAP. XLVIII.

Of the everlasting day, and sturmesse of this life.

O Blessed mansion of the heavenly City! O most cleare day of eternity, which night obscures not, but highest Truth ever enlightens! Day ever pleasant, alwayes secure, never changing into contrary state! O that that day would once appeare,

a Apoc. 22.

and all these temporall things were at an end. To the Saints it shines glistering with euerlasting brightnesse: but to pilgrimes vpon earth it appeares onely afarre of, and as it were through a glasse.

2 The inhabitants of heaven knowe how ioyfull that day is; but the banished children of Eue bewaile the bitternesse, and tediousnesse of this. The dayes of this life are short, and evill, full of sorrow, and anguish; where man is defiled with many sinnes, incumbred with many passions, disquieted with many feares, filled with many cares, distracted with many curiosities, intangled with many vanities, compassed about with many errours, tryed with many labours, vexed with many temptations, weakened with delights, tormented with want,

a Iob. 7.

3 O when will there be an end of these many labours? when shall I be delivered from the miserable bondage of sinne? when shall I, O Lord, thinke of thee alone? when shall I [b] perfectly rejoyce in thee? when shall I be without all impediment in true liberty, without all greife of minde, and body? when shall I have firme peace without trouble, peace secure, peace within, peace without, peace every way assured? O good Jesu, when shall I stand to behold thee? when shall I contemplate the glory of thy kingdome? when wilt thou be all in all to me? O when shall I be with thee in thy kingdome, which thou hast prepared for thy beloved from all eternity? I am left a poore, and banished man in an enemies countrey, where there are daily warres, and very great misfortunes.

[a] Rom. 7. [b] Psal. 70.

Comfort my banishment, asswage my greife, for my whole desire aspires unto thee. And all is burdensome to me, whatsoever this world offers to my comfort. I desire intirely to enjoy thee, but I cannot attaine unto it. I would gladly fixe my heart on heavenly things, but temporall cares, and immortified passions weigh me downe. In minde I would be above all things, but I am forced to be subiect to the flesh against my will. Thus unhappy man I fight with my selfe, *and am become greivous to my selfe, whileſt my ſpirit ſeeke after things that are above, and my fleſh that which is belowe.*

What doe I interiourly suffer, whileſt in minde I consider heavenly things, and suddenly in my prayers a multitude of fleshly fancies present themselves before me.

[a] My

[a] Rom. 7. and 8.

[a] *My God, be not farre from me, depart not in thy wrath from thy servant. Cast forth thy lightening, and disperse them; shoote thy darts, and breake all the phantasies of the enemy.* Gather my senses together unto thee: make me forget all worldly things. Graunt me grace speedily to cast away the fancies of vices. Succour me, everlasting Truth, that no vanity may move me. Come heavenly sweetnesse, and let all impurity flye from thy face. Pardon me also, and mercifully forgive me, as often as I thinke on any thing else in prayer besides thee. For I confesse truely that I am wont to be subject to many distractions. For I am not oftentimes there, where I doe corporally stand, or sit; but rather there whither my thoughts doe carry me. There I am where my thought is; and there oftenti-

[a] Psal. 70.

mes my thought is, where my affection is. That quickly occurres unto me, which is naturally delightsome, or through custome pleasing.

6 And for this reason thou who art Truth it selfe, hast plainely said: a *Where thy treasure is, there also thy heart is.* If I love heaven, I willingly thinke of heavenly things. If I love the world, I rejoyce at the felicity of the world, and am sorry for the adversity thereof. If I love the flesh, I oftentimes imagine those things which are pleasing to the flesh. If I love the spirit, I delight to thinke of spirituall things. For whatsoever things I love, of them I willingly speake, and heare; and carry home with me the images of them. But blessed is the man who for thee, ô Lord, bids farewell to all creatures, who violently resists nature,

a Matth. 6. b Matth. 19.

nature, and through the fervour of spirit crucifies the concupiscences of the flesh, that with a cleare conscience he may offer pure prayer unto thee, and be worthy of the company of the angelicall Quires, all earthly things being interiourly and exteriourly excluded.

CHAP. XLIX.

Of the desire of eternall life, and how great things are promised to them that fight.

MY sonne, when thou perceivest a longing to eternall blisse, to be infused into thee from above, and desirest to depart out of the tabernacle of this body, that thou mayest without any shadowe of interchange contemplate my light, open thy heart, and receive this holy inspiration with thy whole desire. Give the greatest thankes to the heavenly goodnesse

who deales with thee so favourably, visits thee mercifully, ardently excits thee, lifts thee up powerfully, least through thy owne weight thou fall downe to the vanities of the earth. Neither doest thou obtaine this by thy owne thought, and endeavour, but through the onely favour of heavenly grace, and divine bounty; that thou mayest profit in vertue, and greater humility, and prepare thy selfe to future battles, and endeavour to cleave unto me with the whole affection of thy heart, and serve me with a fervent desire.

2. Sonne, fire often burnes, but the flame ascends not up without smoke. In like manner the desires of some men are earnestly carried to the desire of heavenly things, yet are they not free from temptation of carnall affection: and therefore it is not altogether purely

for the honour of God which they doe so earnestly request of him. Such is also oftentimes thy desire which with much importunity thou representest unto me. For it is not pure and perfect, which is infected with selfe interest.

Aske not that which is delightsome, and profitable to thee; but that which is gratefull, and honourable to me. For if thou judgest rightly, thou oughtest to preferre, and followe my appointment, rather then thy owne desire, or any thing to be desired. I knowe thy desire, and have heard thy frequent groanes.[a] Now thou wouldst be in the freedome of the glory of the sonnes of God. Now does the celestiall habitation, and the heavenly countrey full of joy delight thee. But the houre is not

a Iob 7.

yet come: for it is yet another time, to wit, a time of warre, a time of labour, and triall. Thou desirest to be satisfied with the cheifest good; but thou canst not attaine unto it for the present: arm it, expect me (sayes our Lord) till the Kingdome of God come.

4 Thou art yet to be tried upon earth, and to be exercised in many things. Comfort shall be sometimes given thee, but full satiety shall not be graunted. Take courage therefore, and be stout as well in doing, as in suffering things contrary to thy nature. Thou must become a new man, and be changed into another. Thou must oftentimes doe that which thou wouldst not; and leave undone that which thou wouldst. That which is pleasing to others shall goe well forward, that which thou desi-

a Iosue 1. b Eph. 4.

ſt henceforth ſhall not ſpeede,
hat which others ſay, ſhall be
bſerved; that which thou ſayeſt
all not be reckoned of: others
all aske and receive; thou ſhalt
ke and goe without.

Others ſhall be great in the
aiſes of men; but of thee there
all be no ſpeech: to others this
r that ſhall be committed, but
hou ſhalt be accounted fit for
othing. And hereat nature will
ometimes repine, and it is much if
hou endureſt it with ſilence. In the-
e and ſuch like a faithfull ſervant
of our Lord is wont to be tried
how he can deny, and overcome
himſelfe in all things. There is
ſcarce any thing wherein thou haſt
ſuch needs to mortifie thy ſelfe, as
in ſeeing & ſuffering thoſe things
which are contrary to thy will,
but eſpecially when that is com-
manded which ſeemes to thee in-

conve-

convenient, and to little purpo
and since placed under author
thou dares not resist a high
power, it therefore seemes ha
unto thee to walke at the becke
another, and leave wholy th
owne way.

6 But consider, sonne, that the
labours soone end, and have a re
ward great above measure, an
thou wilt conceive no greife there
by, but a strong comfort of th
patience. For in regard of the lit
le of thy will, which thou no
willingly forsakest, thou shalt fo
ever have thy will in heaven. The
re indeed thou shalt have all that
thou wilt, all that thou canst desi
re. There thou shalt enjoy all
good, without feare of loosing it.
There shall thy will be ever one
with me. It shall desire nothing
strange or private. There no man
shall withstand thee, no man com-

plaine

thine of thee, no man hinder thee, nothing come against thee; but all things desired shall be there together present, and delight the whole desire, and satiate it to the highest degree. There I will give thee glory for the reproach which thou sufferest; a garment of praise for greife, for the lowest place the seate of a kingdome for ever; there the fruit of obedience shall appeare, the labour of penance rejoyce, and humble subjection shall be gloriously crowned.

Now therefore bowe thy selfe humbly under the hands of all, and regard not who said or commanded this, but of this take heede that whether thy Prelate, or inferiour, or thine equall require any thing of thee, or doe but insinuate, thou take it all for good, and endeavour to fulfill it with a sincere intention. Let one seeke this, ano-

another that: let him glory in this, another in that, and be praised a thousand thousand times. Yet doe thou rejoyce neither in this, nor that, but in the contempt of thy selfe, and in my good pleasure, and sole honour: this thou art to wish, that in life and death, God may be alwayes glorified in thee.

CHAP. L.

How a desolate person ought to offer himselfe into the hands of God.

1 LOrd God, holy Father, be thou now and for ever blessed, for that as thou wilt it is done, and what thou doest is good. Let thy servant rejoyce in thee, not in himselfe, nor any thing else: for thou alone art the true gladnesse, thou art my hope, and my crowne, thou art my joy, and my honour. O Lord, what hath thy servant? but what he hath of thee even with-

out any desert of his. Thine is all whatsoever a thou hast given, and whatsoever thou hast made. I am poore, and in labours from my youth, and sometimes my soule is heavy even to teares, and sometimes is troubled in her selfe, by reason of passions which arise against her. I desire the joy of peace, I crave the peace of thy children who are fed in the light of thy comfort. If thou give peace, if thou infuse holy joy, the soule of thy servant shall be full of sweetnesse, and devout in thy praise. But if thou withdraw thy selfe as very often b thou art wont, he will not be able to runne the way of thy commandments: but rather his knees are bowed to knocke his breast, for it is not with him as it was yesterday, and the day before, when

a 1. Cor. 4. b Psal. 87. c Psal. 5. 8.

when thy light shined upon h
head, and he was protected und
the shadowe of thy wings fro
temptations rushing upon him.
3 O righteous Father, and ever
be praised, the houre is come th
thy servant may be proved. O F
ther to be beloved, it is fit that
this houre thy servant suffer som
thing for thee. O Father to be ho
noured, the houre is come whi
from all eternity thou didst fore
knowe should come that for
short time thy servant should int
riourly be oppressed, but interiou
ly live for ever with thee; h
should be a little despised, hum
bled, and made as an abject in th
sight of men, and much afflicte
with passions and infirmities, tha
he may rise againe with thee i
the rising of new light, and be cl
rified in heaven. Thou hast so ap
pointed it, holy Father, and wil

have it so, and this is fulfilled which thy selfe hath commanded.

4 For it is a favour to thy freind to suffer and be afflicted in this world for thy love, how often soever and by whom thou permittest it to be done. Without thy counsell and providence, and without cause nothing is done on earth. a *It is good for me, ô Lord, that thou hast humbled me, that I may learne thy justifications*, and cast away all haughtinesse of heart, and presumption. It is profitable for me that shame hath covered my face, that I may rather seeke to thee for comfort then to men. I have learned also hereby to dread thy inscrutable judgements who afflictest the just with the wicked, but not without equity and justice.

5 I give thee thankes that thou hast not spared my sinnes, but hath

a Psal. 118.

lcourged me with ſtripes of love
inflicting ſorrowes and cauſing di
ſtreſſes within and without. There
is none under heaven that can com-
fort me but thou my Lord God the
heavenly Phyſician of ſoules; [a] who
woundeſt and healeſt. [b] *Bringeſt*
hell, and draweſt backe againe; le
thy correction be upon me, and thy
ſhall inſtruct me.

6 Behold, beloved Father, I am
in thy hands, I bowe my ſelfe un-
der the rod of thy correction, le
my necke and ſholders feele the
ſtripes, that my crookedneſſe may
be conformed to thy will. Make
me a pious and humble diſciple of
thine, as thou art wont well to doc
that I may walke according to thy
pleaſure. I commit my ſelfe, and
all mine unto thee to be corrected.
It is better here to be rebuked the
hereafter. Thou knoweſt all, and
every

a Tob. 13. b Pſal. 19.

every thing; and there is nothing in the conscience of man hidden from thee. Before things are done thou knowest that they will happen, and thou hast no neede that they should teach thee, or admonish thee of those things which are done on earth. Thou knowest what is expedient for my good, and how much tribulation conduces to the purging the rust of sinne. Doe with me according to thy desired good pleasure, and despise not my sinnefull life better and more clearly knowne to none, then to thee alone.

7 Graunt me, ô Lord, to knowe what ought to be knowne, and to love what ought to be beloved, to praise that which is most pleasing to thee, to esteeme that which is most pretious to thee, or appeares so; to despise that which is contemptible in thy sight. Suffer me

not to judge according to the sight of the exteriour eye, nor to give sentence according to the hearing of the eares of ignorant men; but to determine of spirituall and visible things with a true judgement, and above all things ever to search after the good pleasure of thy will.

8 The senses of men are often deceived in judging. The lovers of this world are deceived also in loving onely visible things. What is man the better therefore, because he is reputed greater by man? The deceitfull deceives the deceitfull; the vaine the vaine; the blinde the blinde; and the feeble, the feeble; whilest he exalts him; and does truely confound him, whilest he vainely praises him. For how much every one is in thy sight, so much he is, and no more, sayes humble Saint Francis.

CHAP.

CHAP. LI.

That we ought to insist in lowly works, when we are not able for high things.

1 SOnne, thou art not alwayes able to continue in the fervent desire of vertue, nor to persist in the high pitch of contemplation; but thou must sometimes of necessity by reason of originall corruption descend to inferiour things, and beare the burden of this corruptible life even against thy will, and with irksomnesse. As long as thou carriest this mortall body, thou shalt feele trouble, and heavinesse of heart. Thou oughtest therefore in flesh often to bewaile the burthen of flesh, for that thou canst not alwayes persever in spirituall exercises, and derive contemplation.

2 It is then expedient for thee to flye to humble and exteriour wor-

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2 It is then expedient for thee to flye to humble and exteriour wor-

kes, and to recreate thy selfe in good actions; to expect with firme confidence my coming, and heavenly visitation; to beare patiently thy banishment, and the dryneſſe of thy minde, till thou be visited againe by me, and delivered from all anxieties: for I will make thee forget thy pains and enjoy interiour quietneſſe. I will lay open before thee the pleasant fields of Scripture, and with an inlarged heart thou shalt beginne to runne the way of my commandments, and thou shalt say: [a] *The sufferings of this time are not condigne to the future glory which shall be revealed in us.*

[a] Rom. 8.

CHAP.

Chap. LII.

That man must not esteeme himselfe worthy of comfort, but rather worthy of stripes.

1 I Am not worthy, Lord, of thy comfort, or any spirituall visitation. And thou dealest therefore justly with me, when thou leavest me poore and desolate. For if I could shed teares like a sea, yet were I not worthy of thy comfort, and therefore I am worthy of nothing but stripes and punishments. For I have greivously and often offended thee, and very much sinned in many things. According therefore to true reason, I am not worthy of the least consolation. But thou clement and mercifull, who wilt not have thy workes to perish, to shew the riches of thy goodnesse to vessels of mercy, even beyond all ones owne desert

vouchsafest to comfort thy servant above humane measure. For thy comforts are not like humane comforts.

2 What have I done, ô Lord, that thou shouldest impart any heavenly comfort unto me? I remember not that I have ever done any good, but have alwayes beene prone to sinne, and sloathfull to amendment. It is true, and I cannot deny it; if I should say otherwise, thou wouldst stand against me, and there would be none to defend me. What have I deserved for my sinnes, but hell, and everlasting fire. In truth [a] I confesse my selfe to be worthy of all scorne, and contempt, and it is unfit I should dwell amongst thy devout servants. And though I be unwilling to heare this, yet not withstanding according to truth, I will argue my sinnes

[a] Iob 9.

es against me, that I may better deserve to obtaine thy mercy.

What shall I say, being guilty and worthy of all confusion? I can utter from my mouth no other word, but this onely: I have sinned, ô Lord, I have sinned, have mercy on me, and pardon me. *Suffer me a little, that I may bewaile my greefe, before I goe into the land of darknesse, and be covered with the shadow of death.* What doest thou chiefly require of a guilty and miserable sinner, but that he be contrite, and sorrowfull, and humble himselfe for his offences? In true contrition, and humblenesse of heart is bred hope of forgivenesse; a troubled conscience is reconciled, grace lost repared, man defended from future wrath, and God and a penitent soule meete together in the holy kisse of peace.

a Psal. 50. Iob 10.

4 Humble contrition for ſinnes is an acceptable ſacrifice unto thee, ô Lord, ſavouring much more ſweete in thy preſence, then burning frankincenſe. This alſo the gratefull ointment which thou wouldſt have powred upon thy feete. For thou never deſpiſed an humble and contrite heart. There is a place of refuge from the face of the wrath of the enemy, there is amended, and waſhed away whatſoever uncleanneſſe hath beene elſewhere contracted, and whatſoever is defiled.

a Luke 7.

CHAP. LIII.

That the grace of God is not given to thoſe, who ſavour of earthly things.

1 SOnne, my grace is pretious, it ſuffers not it ſelfe to be intermined with exteriour things, nor earthly comforts. Thou ought there-

therefore to cast away all impediments of grace, if thou desire to receive the infusion thereof. Choose a secret place to thy selfe, love to dwell alone with thy selfe, desire the conversation of none, but rather powre out devout prayers unto God, that thou mayest keepe thy mind compunct, and thy conscience pure. Esteeme the whole world as nothing. Preferre the vocation of God before all exteriour things. For thou canst not attend unto me, and delight also in transitory things. [a] Thou oughtest to sequester thy selfe from thy acquaintance and freinds, and keepe thy minde deprived from all temporall comfort. So the blessed Apostle Saint Peter beseeches all faithfull freinds of Christ, [b] *to keepe themselves as strangers, and pilgrimes in this world from carnall desires which*

a Matth. 19. b 1. Pet. 2.

warre against the soule.

O how great confidence shall he have at the houre of death, whom no affection to any earthly thing detaines in this world. But a weake minde is not yet capable of so refined a heart. Neither does the sensuall man understand the liberty of an interne man. If notwithstanding he will be spirituall, he ought to renounce as well that which is farre of, as that which is neare unto him, and to beware of no man more then himselfe. If thou perfectly overcome thy selfe, thou shalt with more ease subdue the rest. It is a perfect victory to triumph over our selves. For he that keepes himselfe under in such sort, that his sensuality be subject to reason, and reason in all things obedient to me, he is truely a conquerour of himselfe, and Lord of the world.

If thou desire to mount unto
this height, thou must beginne
manfully, and set the axe to the
roote, that thou mayest roote out,
and destroy thy secret inordinate
inclination to thy selfe, and to all
private and earthly good. Of this
vice that man too inordinately lo-
ves himselfe, almost all depends
whatsoever is wholy to be over-
come. There will presently ensue
great peace, and tranquillity. But
because few endeavour to dye per-
fectly to themselves, they remaine
therefore intangled in themselves,
and cannot be lifted up in spirit
above themselves. But he that de-
sires to walke freely with me, it is
necessary he mortifie his naughty
and inordinate affections, and ad-
here to no creature with desire
through private love.

CHAP. LIV.

Of different motions of nature and grace.

SOnne, observe diligently the motions of nature and grace, for they move very contrarily, and subtilly, and can hardly be distinguished but by him that is spiritual, and inwardly enlightned. All men indeed desire that which is good, and pretend some good in their words or deeds; and therefore under pretence of good many are deceived. Nature is crafty and seduces, intangles and deceives many, and alwayes intends her self for her end. But grace walkes simply, and avoides all shew of evill, pretends not deceits, and does all things purely for God in whom she also finally rests.

2 Nature will not willingly dye, nor be kept in, or overcome, or be sub-

subject, or of her owne accord subdued But grace labours to mortifie her selfe, resists sensuality, seekes to be subject, is willing to be overcome, and will not use her owne liberty. She loves to be kept under discipline, and desires not to domineere over any, but alwayes to live, remaine, and be under God, and for God is ready humbly to bowe her selfe unto all men. Nature strives for her owne commodity, and considers what profit she may reape by another. But grace considers not what is commodious and profitable to her selfe, but rather what is profitable to many. Nature willingly receives honour and reverence. But grace faithfully attributes all honour and glory to God.

3 Nature feares shame and contempt, but grace rejoyces to suffer reproach for the Name of Jesus.

Nature

Nature loves idlenesse, [a] and boisi-
ly rest; but grace cannot be idle,
and willingly embraces labour.
Nature seekes to have those things
that be curious and pretious, and
flyes that which is meane and base.
But grace delights in simple and
humble things, despises not things
despicable, nor refuses to be clad
with old cloathes. Nature respects
things temporall, rejoyces at
earthly gaine, sorrowes for losse, is
moved with every little injurious
word. But grace ascends to that
which is everlasting, and cleaves
not to that which fades with time,
nor is troubled with losse, nor ex-
asperated with injuries, for that she
hath placed her treasure and joy in
heaven, where nothing perishes.
4 Nature is covetous, and does
more willingly receive then give;
she loves proper & private things.
But
[a] Act. 5.

But grace is pittifull, and liberall to all, avoides singularity, is content with little, and judges it more happy to give then to receive. Nature inclines to creatures, to her owne flesh, to vanity, and to discourses. But grace drawes to God and to vertue, renounces creatures, flyes the world, hates the desires of the flesh, restraines wandrings abroad, blushs to be seen in publike. Nature is willing to have some exterior cõfort wherin she may delight her senses But grace seekes comfort in God alone, and delightes above all visible things in the cheifest good.

5 Nature does all for her owne gaine and profit, she can doe nothing freely, but hopes to gaine either that which is equall, or better, or praise, or favour for her good deeds, and covets to have her gifts and workes much esteemed. But grace seekes no temporall thing,

not askes any other reward for he
deserts then God alone, nor desir
more of temporall necessaries tho
what may serve her for the obtai
ing of things eternall.

6. Nature rejoyces to have man
friends, and kinsfolks; she glorie
of noble birth and descent, pleas
the powerfull, fawnes upon the
rich, applaudes such as are like he
But grace loves her enemies, i
not puffed up with multitude o
freinds, nor esteemes place, o
birth, unlesse it be joyned wit
great vertue; she rather favour
the poore then the rich, hath mo
compassion of the innocent the
potent, rejoyces much in the sim
ple, and respects not the deceitfull
exhorts the good ever to labou
for better gifts, and though ver
tue to be like the Sonne of God
Nature soone complaines of wan
and trouble. Grace constantly su
fers want.

y Nature turns all things to her selfe, and strives, and contends for her selfe. But grace reduces all to God, from whence they originally proceed; she ascribes no good to her selfe, neither does she arrogantly presume of her selfe; she contends not nor preferres her owne opinion before others, but in every sense and understanding submits her selfe unto the eternall wisdome, and to the divine judgement. Nature covets to knowe secrets, and to heare newes; she will appeare abroad, and make use of many things by the senses, she desires to be knowne, and to doe those things for which she may be praised, and admired. But grace cares not to heare newes, nor to understand curious matters; for all this springs from the old corruption, seeing nothing is new and durable upon earth. She teaches

therefore to restraine the senses, to avoid vaine pleasing and ostentation, humbly to hide those things which are worthy of praise and admiration; and from every thing, and every knowledge drawes profitable fruit, and the praises and honour of God: she will not have her selfe, or hers publikely praised, but desires that God may be blessed in his gifts, who of meere charity bestowes all things.

8 This grace is a supernaturall light, and a certaine speciall gift of God, and the proper marke of the elect, and pledge of everlasting salvation, which lifts up a man from earthly basenesse to love heavenly things, and of a carnall makes a spirituall person. How much the more therefore nature is suppressed and subdued, so much the greater grace is infused, and the interne man dayly by new visita-

tion

tions more perfected according to the image of God.

CHAP. LV.

Of the corruption of nature, and efficacy of divine grace.

1 MY Lord God who hast created me to thy image and likeneſſe; grant me this grace which thou haſt ſhewed to be ſo great, and ſo neceſſary to ſalvation, that I may overcome my moſt wicked nature, which drawes to ſinne and perdition [a] *For I feele in my fleſh the law of ſinne, contradicting the law of my minde, and leading me captive to obey ſenſuality in many things.* Neither can I reſiſt the paſſions thereof, unleſſe thy holy grace fervently infuſed into my heart does aſſiſt me.

2 Thy grace, and great grace is neceſſary that nature may be over-

[a] Rom. 7.

come, which is alwayes prone to evill from her youth. For it falling through Adam the first man, and being corrupted by sinne, the penalty of this spott hath descended upon all mankinde. That nature it selfe which by thee was created good, and without defect, is now accounted for vice, and infirmity of corrupt nature, since the motion thereof left unto it selfe, drawes to evill and abiect things: for the little force which remaines, is like a certaine sparke lying hidden in the ashes. This is naturall reason it selfe compassed about with darknesse, retaining yet the power to discerne betwixt good and evill, and the distance betweene true and false, though it be unable to fulfill all it approves, and enjoyes not now the full light of truth, nor the formes integrity of her affections.

3 Hence it is, my God, that accor-

ding

ding to my interiour man, a I delight in thy Law, knowing thy command to be good, juſt, and holy; reproving alſo all evill, and ſhewing that ſinne is to be ſhunned. But in fleſh I ſerve the law of ſinne, whileſt I rather obey ſenſuality then reaſon. Hence it is that I have a will to good, but cannot tell how to doe it: for this reaſon I often propoſe many good things, but becauſe I want grace to helpe my infirmity, through a light reſiſtance I goe backe, and faint. Hence it happens that I knowe the way of perfection, and ſee clearly enough what I ought to doe, but preſſed downe with the weight of my owne corruption, I riſe not unto it.

4 How needfull, ô Lord, is thy grace to me to beginne any good worke, to goe forward, and to ac-

a Rom. 7.

compliſh it. For without thy grace I can doe nothing. But in thee I can doe all things, when thy grace does ſtrengthen me. [a] O heavenly grace, without which our merits are nothing, or any gifts of nature to be eſteemed! Without thy grace, ô Lord, arts are nothing worth, beauty nothing, riches nothing, ſtrength nothing, wit nothing, eloquence nothing: for gifts of nature are common to good and evill men; but grace or charity is the peculiar gift of the elect, wherewith being marked they are eſteemed worthy of life everlaſting. [b] This grace ſo much excells, that neither propheſie, nor the working of miracles, nor any ſpeculation how high ſoever, is of no eſteeme without it; yea neither faith, nor hope, nor other virtues are acceptable unto thee without charity and grace.

a Iohn 15. b 1 Cor. 13.

5 O most blessed grace which makes the poore in spirit rich in virtues, and renders the rich in many good things humble in heart; come descend unto me, replenish me in the morning with thy comfort, least my soule should faint with wearinesse and dryness of minde. [a] I beseech thee, ô Lord, that I may finde grace in thy sight. For thy grace is sufficient for me, though other things be wanting, which nature desires. If I be tempted and vexed with many tribulations, I will not feare evills while thy grace is with me; she is my strength, she gives advise and helpe, she is stronger then all enemies, and wiser then all the wise.

6 She is mistresse of truth, teacher of discipline, light of the heart, solace in affliction, banisher of sorrowe, expeller of feare, nurse of devo-

a Psalm 22.

devotion, and fountaine of teares. What am I without it, but a peece of dry wood, and an unprofitable blocke to be caſt away? Let thy grace therefore, ô Lord, alwayes prevent and followe me, and make me ever diligent in good workes.

Chap. LVI.

That we ought to deny our ſelves, and imitate Chriſt by the Croſſe.

1 SOnne, as much as thou canſt goe out of thy ſelfe, ſo much mayeſt thou enter into me. As to be void of all deſire of externall things, makes internall peace, ſo interioutly forſaking of our ſelves conjoynes us to God. I will have thee learne the perfect leaving of thy ſelfe unto my will without contradiction, or complaint. Followe me, [a] *I am the way, the truth, and the life.* Without the way there is

a Iohn 14.

e is no going, without truth here is no knowledge, without ife there is no living. I am the ay which thou muſt follow e, the ruth which thou muſt beleive, the ife which thou muſt hope for. I m the way which cannot lead miſſe, the truth which cannot rre, the life which hath no end. I m a moſt ſtraight way, a ſupreame ruth, a true life, a bleſſed life, an ncreated life If thou remaine in ny way, thou ſhalt knowe the ruth, and truth ſhall deliver thee, nd thou ſhalt attaine to life ever-aſting.

a *If thou wilt enter into life, eepe my commandments.* b *If thou wilt knowe the truth, beleive me.* c *If thou wilt be perfect, ſell all.* d *If thou wilt be my diſciple, deny thy ſelfe.* e *If thou wilt poſſeſſe a bleſſed life, deſpiſe this preſent life.* If thou wilt be ex-

alted

a Math. 19. b In the ſame place. c Luke 9. d John 12. e Luke 14.

alted in heaven, humble thy self in this world. If thou wilt reign with me, beare the Crosse with me. For the servants of the Crosse onely finde the way of blisse, and true light.

3 Lord Jesus Christ, for as much as thy life is strict, and contemptible to the world, grant me to imitate the contempt of the world with thee: [a] *for the servant is not greater then his Lord, nor the disciple above his Maister.* Let thy servant be exercised in thy holy life, since there is my health, and true sanctity; whatsoever I heare or read besides, does not recreate, or delight me fully.

4 Sonne, now thou knowest, and hast read all these things, happy shalt thou be, if thou fulfill them. [b] *He that hath my commandments, and keepes them, he it is that loves me, and*

a Matth. 7. b Iohn 14.

and I will love him, and will manifest myselfe unto him, and will make him sit with me in the Kingdome of my Father. Lord, as thou hast said therefore, and promised, so verily let it happen that I may deserve it. I have received from thy hand a Crosse; I will beare it till death as thou hast laid it upon me. The life truly of a good Monke is a Crosse, but guide to Paradise. It is now begunne, it is not lawfull to goe backe, or leave it off.

Let us take courage, my brethren, and goe forward together, Jesus will be with us. For Jesus his sake we have taken upon us this Crosse: for Jesus sake let us persever in it. He will be our helper, who is our guide, and forerunner. Behold our King walkes before us, who will fight for us. Let us follow him couragiously: let us not be dismayed, but be ready to dye with

with courage in the battle: let us not blemish our glory by flying from the Crosse.

Chap. LVII.

That man be not too much dejected when he falls into defects.

1 SOnne, patience and humility in adversity are more pleasing to me, then much comfort and devotion in prosperity. What, art thou greived for every little trifle done, or spoken against thee? though it had beene much more, thou oughtest not to have beene moved. But now let it passe, it is not the first or any new thing, nor will not be the last, if thou live long. Thou art manfull enough as long as no evill, or adverse thing occures: thou canst give good counsell also, and canst strengthen others with thy words. But when any tribulation suddenly knocks at

at thy doore, thou art void of counsell, and strength. Behold thy great frailty which thou often experiences even on small occasions. Yet they are done notwithstanding for thy good, when these or the like things befall thee.

2 Put it out of thy heart the best thou canst, and if it touch thee, let it not deject thee, or trouble thee; beare it at least patiently, if thou canst not joyfully. Though thou be unwilling to heare it, and feelest disdaine, yet represse thy selfe, and suffer no inordinate word to passe out of thy mouth which may be a scandall to the weake. The storme now raised will be quickly asswaged and the interiour greife appeased through the returne of grace. I [a] doe yet live (sayes our Lord) ready to helpe thee and comfort thee more then before, if thou put thy

a Esa. 49.

thy truſt in me, and devoutly call upon thee.

3 Be more quiet in minde, and prepare thy ſelfe for greater ſuffering All is not loſt if thou feele thy ſelfe often afflicted, or greivouſly tempted: thou art a man not God thou art fleſh, not an Angell How canſt thou looke to continue ever in the ſame ſtate of vertue, [a] when an Angell in heaven fell, and the firſt man in Paradiſe, both which ſtood not long? I am he who give healthfull comfort to them that mourne, and doe raiſe up unto my divinity ſuch as knowe their own frailty

4 [b] *Bleſſed be thy Word, O Lord more ſweete unto my mouth then honey and hony combe* What ſhould I doe in my ſo great tribulations and anguiſhes, unleſſe thou didſt comfort me with thy holy ſpeche

a Gen. 3. b Pſal. 118.

ches? What matter is it how much and what I ſuffer, ſo I may at length attaine unto the haven of ſalvation? Grant me a good end, grant me a happy paſſage out of this world: be mindfull of me, my God, and direct me the ſtreight way to thy Kingdome. Amen.

CHAP. LVIII.

Of no ſearching into high matters, and the ſecret judgements of God.

SOnne, beware thou diſpute not of high matters, nor of the ſecret judgements of God, why this man is forſaken, and that man aſſumed to ſo great grace; why this man is alſo ſo much afflicted, and that man ſo highly advanced. Theſe things exceed all humane power, neither can any reaſon or diſcourſe ſearch out the judgement of God. When therefore the enemy ſuggeſts theſe things unto

thee, or ſome curious people inquire of them, anſwere that of the Prophet: [a] *Thou art juſt, ô Lord, and thy judgement is right.* And that, [b] *the judgements of our Lord are true, and juſtified in themſelves.* My judgements are to be feared, not diſcuſſed: for to humane underſtanding they are incomprehenſible.

2 In like manner doe not inquire, or diſpute of the merits of the Saints, which of them is holyer then the other, or which is greater in the Kingdome of heaven Theſe things breed oftentimes ſtrife, and unprofitable contentions: they nouriſh alſo pride and vaine glory, whence ariſe envy and diſſentions, whileſt one will proudly preferre this Saint, another another. To deſire to knowe, and ſearch out ſuch thing, is to no purpoſe, but rather diſpleaſes the Saints. For

a Pſal. 118. b Pſal 18.

For I am not the God of diſſenſion, but of peace, which peace conſiſts rather in true humility, then in exalting of our ſelves

3 Some are carried ith zeale of affection to love theſe or thoſe moſt; but this love is rather humane then divine. I am he who made all the Saints, I have given them grace, I have made them partakers of my glory. I knowe the merits of every one, I have prevented them in the benedictions of my ſweetneſſe. I foreknewe my beloved before the beginning of the world; I choſe them out of the world, they choſe not me firſt. I called them by grace, I drew them by mercy, I lead them through ſundry temptations; I have infuſed into them great comforts, I have given them perſeverance, I have crowned their patience.

4 I knowe the firſt and the laſt,

I imbrace all with ineſtimable love, I am to be praiſed in all my Saints, I am to be bleſſed above all things; I am to be honoured in every one whom I have thus gloriouſly exalted, and predeſtinated without any of their owne precedent merits. He therefore that contemns one of the leaſt Saints, honours [a] not the greateſt, ſince I have made both the leſſe, and the greater. [b] And he that derogates from any of the Saints, derogates from me, and all the reſt of them in the Kingdome of heaven. All are one through the band of charity, they thinke the ſame, they will the ſame, and all love one another in one.

5 But yet (which is much more high) they love me more then themſelves, and their owne merits. For being elevated above them-

a 1am. 2. b wiſd. 9.

themselves, and drawne out of self-love, they tend wholy unto the love of me, in which they rest enjoyingly. There is nothing can put them backe, nothing presse them downe from being full of everlasting Truth. They burne with the fire of unquenchable charity. Let therefore carnall and sensuall men, who knowe not how to affect any thing, but private joyes, forbeare to dispute of the state of the Saints. They adde and take away according to their owne inclination, not according to the pleasure of eternall Truth.

6 There is in many ignorance, especially in those who are but little enlightened; they seldome love any with perfect spirituall love; they are yet much drawne with a naturall affection, and humane freindship to these, or those, and as they experience themselves in

earthly things, so they imagine of heavenly. But there is an incomparable distance, which the imperfect knowe not, and the illuminated persons discerne by revelation from above

7 Beware therefore, my sonne, that thou treate not curiously of these things which exceed thy knowledge: but labour for this, that thou mayest at least have the meanest place in the Kingdome of God And if any did knowe who were holier then another, or accounted greater in the Kingdome of heaven; what would this knowledge profit him, unlesse he would thereby humble himselfe more in my sight, and stirre up his minde to praise my name with greater fervour? He does that which is more acceptable to God, who considers the greatnesse of his sinnes, and the smalnesse of his vertues,

tues, and how farre of he is from the perfection of the Saints, then he that disputes of their greatnesse, or littlenesse. It is better to pray to the Saints with devotion and teares, and crave their glorious suffrages with an humble minde, then to search into their secrets with vaine inquisition.

8 They are well, and right well contented, if men would content themselves, and refraine from their vaine discourses. They glory not of their owne merits, for they ascribe no good unto themselves, but attribute all unto me, who of my infinite charity bestowed all upon them. They repleniſhed with so great love of my Godhead, and such superaboundant joy, that there is no glory wanting unto them, nor can any happinesse be wanting unto them. All the Saints how much the higher they be in

glory, so much the more humble they are in themselves, and nearer, and more beloved to me. And therefore thou hast it written, *That they* [a] *did cast their crownes before God, and fell downe upon their faces before the Lambe, and adored him that lives for ever and ever. Amen.*

9 Many inquire who is greatest in the Kingdome of heaven or God, who knowe not whither they must be numbred amongst the least. It is a great matter to be even the least in heaven where all are great. *For all shall be called, and be the sonnes of God. The least shall be as a thousand, and a sinner of a hundred yeares shall die.* For when the disciples asked who was the greater in the Kingdome of heaven, they received such an answere: [b] *Vnlesse ye be converted, and become as children, you shall not enter into the King-*

a Apoc. 4. b Matth 18.

Kingdome of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himselfe as this little childe, he is the greater in the Kingdome of heaven.

10 Woe be to them that disdaine to humble themselves willingly with little children, for the low gate of the Kingdome of heaven will not admit them to enter. Woe also to [a] rich men who have their comforts; for whilest the poore enter into [b] the Kingdome of heaven, they shall stand waiting without. Rejoyce you that are humble, and exult you that are poore, for that yours is the Kingdome of God; yet so as you walke in truth.

a Math 6. b Math. 5.

Chap. LIX.

That all hope and trust is to be fixed in God alone.

1 LOrd, what is my trust which I have in this life? or what is

the greateſt comfort of all things appearing under heaven? Is it not thou, my Lord God, whoſe mercies are without number? Where hath it beene wel with me without thee? or when could it be ill with me, when thou wert present? I had rather be poore for thee, then rich without thee. I rather chooſe to be a pilgrime upon earth with thee, then to poſſeſſe heaven without thee. Where thou art there is heaven, and there death and hell where thou art not. Thou art my deſire, and therefore I muſt needs ſigh after thee, and cry, and pray. In none laſtly can I fully confide, who in time of neceſſity may more opportunely helpe me, then thee onely, my God. [a] *Thou art my hope and my truſt.* [b] *Thou art my comforter, and moſt faithfull to me in all things.*

2 All

a Pſal. 9. b Pſal. 141.

All men seeke their owne gaine, [a] thou onely seekest my salvation and profit, and turnest all things to my good. And though thou expose me to many temptations and adversities, yet thou ordainest all this for my profit, who art wont to prove thy beloved servants thousand wayes, in which proofe thou oughtest no lesse to be beloved, and praised, then if thou didst replenish me with heavenly consolations.

3 In thee therefore, my Lord God, I put all my hope, and refuge, and place all my tribulation and anguish; for I finde all to be smoake, and inconstant whatsoever I behold out of thee. For many freinds shall not availe me, nor strong helpers aide me, nor prudent counsellors give a profitable answere, nor the bookes of the learned

a Phil 2.

learned comfort, nor any weal
deliver, nor any ſecret place de
fend, if thou thy ſelfe doe not a
ſiſt, helpe, ſtrengthen, comfort, in
ſtruct and keepe us.

4 For all things which ſeeme t
be ordained for the reſt and felici
ty of man, when thou art abſent
are nothing, and conferre no felici
ty at all. Thou art therefore th
end of all that is good, and th
height of life and depth of wiſ
dome. And the moſt ſtrong com
fort of thy ſervants is to truſt i
thee above all things. To thee
lift up mine eyes, in thee I confid
My God, Father of mercies, bleſſ
and ſanctifie my ſoule with hea
venly bleſſing, that it may be made
thy holy habitation, and the ſeate
of thy eternall glory. And that no
thing may be found in the temple
of thy greatneſſe that may offend
the eyes of thy Majeſty. According
to

to the greatneſſe of thy goodneſſe, and the multitude of thy mercies, take pitty upon me, and heare the prayer of thy poore ſervant, who is farre exiled from thee in the land of the ſhadow of death. Protect and keepe the ſoule of thy little ſervant amidſt ſo many dangers of this corruptible life, and through the aſſiſtance of thy grace direct him in the way of peace to the countrey of everlaſting light.

The end of the third Booke.

THE

THE IV. BOOK OF THE IMITATION OF CHRIST.

Of the Sacrament of the Body of Christ.

The Preface.

Come unto [a] me all y[e] that labour, and are bur-dened, and I will refresh you, sayes our Lord [b] The bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world. [c] Take ye, and eate, this is my Body, that shall be de-livered for you. [d] This doe you in com-memoration of me. He that eates my flesh and drinkes my blood remaines in me,

a Matth. 11. b Iohn 6. c Matth. 26. d 1. Cor. 11.

That you maie eate and drinke at my Table in my

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me, and I in him [a] *The Words which I have ſpoken unto you are ſpirit and life.*

a John 6.

The first Chapter.

With how great reverence Christ is to be received.

THeſe are thy words, ô Chriſt everlaſting Truth, though not ſpoken at one time, nor written in one place. Since therefore they are thy words, they are all thankfully and faithfully to be received by me. They are thine, and thou haſt ſpoken them for my ſalvation. I willingly receive them from thy mouth, that they may be more aptly printed in my heart. Theſe devout words full of ſweetneſſe and love, doe ſtirre me up, but mine owne offences terrifie me, and my impure conſcience repulſes

pulses me from receiving so great mysteries The sweetnesse of the words does incourage me, but the multitude of my sinnes does oppresse me.

2 Thou commandest me to come confidently unto thee, if I will have part with thee; and to receive the food of immortality, if I desire to obtaine everlasting life, and glory. a *Come*, sayes thou, *unto me all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you.* O sweete and lovely word in the eare of a sinner that thou my Lord God shouldst invite the poore and needy to the communion of thy most blessed Body. But who am I, Lord, that I may presume to approach unto thee? Behold the heavens cannot countaine thee, and thou sayest, *Come ye all unto me.*

3 What meanes this most pious vouch-

a Matth. 11.

vouchsafing, and so loving an invitation? How shall I dare to come, who am conscious of no good thing whereupon I may presume? How shall I bring thee into my house, who have often offended thy most gracious countenance? The Angels, and Archangels reverence thee, the Saints and just men feare thee, and thou sayest, *Come ye all unto me.* Unlesse thou, ô Lord, didst say it, who would believe it to be true? and unlesse thou didst command it, who would dare to approach? Loe, [a] Noah a just man laboured a hundred yeares in building of the Arke, that he with a few might be saved: and how can I in one houres space prepare my selfe with reverence to receive the Maker of the world?

4 Moyses thy servant, thy great and speciall freind, made an Arke

[a] Gen 6.

of incorruptible wood, which he also covered with [a] most pure gold to place therein the Tables of the Law. And shall I, rotten creature, so lightly dare to receive the Law-maker and Giver of life? [b] Salomon the wisest of the Kings of Israel bestowed seven yeares in building a magnificent Temple in praise of thy Name, and celebrated the feast of the dedication thereof eight dayes together. He offered a thousand peaceable sacrifices, and solemnly set the Arke of the Covenant in the place [c] prepared for it with sound of trumpet, and Jubilee. And I the most unhappy and poorest of men, how shall I bring thee into my house, who can hardly spend one half houre devoutly? and I would to God it were once almost one half houre worthily.

5 O my God, how much did they

a Exod. 25. and 26. b 3 Kings 6. 3. Kings 8.

they endeavour to doe to please thee! Alas, how little it is that I doe! how short a time doe I spend when I prepare my selfe to receive! I am seldome wholy recollected, very seldome altogether free from distraction; and yet surely no indecent cogitation should occurre in the wholesome presence of thy Deity, nor any creature busy me; for I am not to receive as guest an Angell, but the Lord of Angells.

6 And yet there is great difference betwixt the Arke of the Covenant, and the reliques thereof, and thy most pure Body with the unspeakable vertues thereof: betweene those legall sacrifices, figures of future things, and the true sacrifice of thy Body, the compliment of all ancient sacrifices. Why therefore doe I not become more fervent to enjoy thy venerable pre-

ſence? why doe I not prepare my ſelfe with greater care to receive thy ſacred gifts, ſith thoſe holy ancient Patriarchs and Prophets, yea Kings alſo and Princes with the whole people have ſhewed ſo great zeale of devotion to thy divine ſervice?

7 The moſt devout King David daunced before the Arke of God with all his force, calling to minde the benefits beſtowed in times paſt on the Fathers: [a] he made organs of ſundry kindes, he publiſhed Pſalmes, and appointed them to be ſung with joy: he himſelfe alſo plaid upon the harpe: being inſpired with the grace of the holy Ghoſt, he taught the people of Iſrael to praiſe God with their whole heart, and with delightfull voices every day to bleſſe and praiſe him. If ſo great devotion was then uſed,

[a] 2. King. 6.

used, and such memory of divine praise before the Arke of the Testament; what reverence and devotion is now to be performed by me and all Christian people in the presence of this Sacrament, in receiving the most excellent Body of Christ?

8 Many runne to sundry places to visit the Reliques of the Saints, and are astonished when they heare of their miraculous workes They behold the high buildings of Churches, and kisse their sacred bones wrapt in silke and gold And behold thou art here present with me on the Altar, my God, the Holy of holies, Creatour of all things, and Lord of Angells. Curiosity oftentimes and novelty of things not seene before, drawe men to behold such sights; and little fruit of amendment is reaped thereby, especially where there is such incon-

stant wandring, without true contrition. But here in the Sacrament of the Altar thou art wholy present, my God and Man Jesus Christ, where plentifull fruit of eternall salvation is also reaped, as often as thou art worthily and devoutly received. And to this not any levity, nor curiosity, or sensuality invites, but firme faith, devout hope, and sincere charity.

9 O God the invisible Creator of this world, how wonderfully doest thou deale with us? how sweetly and graciously doest thou dispose of thy elect, to whom thou offerest thy selfe to be received in the Sacrament? For this exceeds all understanding of man. This cheifly moves the hearts of the devout, and inflames their desire, since thy true faithfull servants, who dispose their whole life to amendment, by this most worthy Sacrament,

receive oftentimes great grace of devotion, and love of vertue.

10 O admirable and hidden grace of this Sacrament, which the faithfull onely of Christ doe know; but the unfaithfull, and such as are slaves to sinne cannot experience. In this Sactament spirituall grace is given, and lost vertue restored in the soule, and beauty disfigured by sinne returns againe. This grace is sometimes so great, that with the fulnesse of infused devotion not onely the minde, but the weake body also feeles great increase of strength.

11 Our coldnesse and negligence is much verily to be bewailed and pitied, that we are not drawne with greater affection to receive Christ, in whom all the hope and merit of those who are to be saved doth consist, for he is our sanctification and redemption. He is

the comfort of passengers, and the everlasting fruition of the Saints. It is much therefore to be lamented, that many doe so little consider this saving mystery, which rejoyces heaven, and conserves the whole world. O blindnesse and hardnesse of mans heart, that does not more deeply weigh so ineffable a gift; but rather through dayly use thereof comes not to regard it.

12 For if this most holy Sacrament were celebrated in one onely place, and consecrated by one onely Preist in the world; with how great desire doest thou thinke would men be affected to that place, and to such a Preist of God, that they might heare the divine mysteries celebrated? But now there are many Preists made, and Christ is offered up in many places, that so the grace and love of God

God to man may appeare so much the greater, how much more this sacred Communion is common throughout the world Thankes be to thee, good Jesu eternall Pastor, who hast vouchsafed to refresh us poore and banished men with thy most precious Body and Blood, and to invite us to the receiving of these mysteries with the words of thy owne mouth, saying, [a] *Come unto me all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you.*

[a] Math. 11

CHAP. II.

That the great goodnesse and charity of God is bestowed on man in this Sacrament.

1 PResuming on thy great goodnesse and mercy, ô Lord, I being sicke approach unto my Saviour, hungry and thirsty to the fountaine of life, needy to the

King of heaven, a ſervant to his Lord, a creature to his Creator, deſolate to my pious Comforter, a *But whence is this to me, that thou comeſt to me?* what am I, that thou ſhouldeſt beſtowe on me thy ſelfe? How dare a ſinner appeare before thee? and how doeſt thou vouchſafe to come unto a ſinner? Thou knoweſt thy ſervant, and ſeeſt that he hath no good in him; why doeſt thou this for him? I confeſſe therefore my unworthineſſe, and acknowledge thy goodneſſe; I praiſe thy mercy, and give thee thankes for thy exceſſive charity. Thou doeſt this truely for thy owne ſake, not my merits, to the end thy goodneſſe may be better knowne unto me, thy charity more aboundantly ſhewed, and thy humility more highly commended. Since therefore it is thy pleaſure, and

a Luke

and thou haſt commanded that it ſhould be ſo; this thy vouchſafing is pleaſing alſo to me, and I doe wiſh that my offences may be no hinderance.

2 O moſt ſweete and benigne Jeſu, how great reverence and thankes with perpetuall praiſe is due unto thee, for the receiving of thy ſacred Body, whoſe dignity no man is found able to expreſſe? But what ſhall I thinke of in this Communion, in the acceſſe to my Lord, whom I cannot duely reverence, and yet deſire to receive him devoutly? What can I thinke of better and more profitable, then to humble my ſelfe entirely before thee, and to exalt thy infinite goodneſſe above me? I praiſe thee, my God, and exalt thee for ever. I deſpiſe my ſelfe, and ſubject my ſelfe unto thee, even unto the depth of my unworthineſſe.

3 Be-

3 Behold thou art the Holy of holies, and I the scumme of sinners Behold thou bowest thy selfe downe unto me, who am not worthy to looke up upon thee. Behold thou comest to me, it is thy will to be with me, thou inviteſt me to thy banquet, thou wilt give me thy heavenly food and bread of Angels to eate, no other truely then thy selfe [a] *the living bread that descended from heaven, and giveſt life to the world.*

4 Behold whence love proceeds, what a bounty shines forth? how great thankes and praises are due unto thee for these things? O how wholesome and profitable was thy counsell, when thou ordainedst it! how sweete and pleasant thy banquet, when thou gavest thy selfe to be our food! how wonderfull thy worke, ô Lord, how powerfull

[a] Psal. 77. Iob 6.

full thy vertue, how ineffable thy Truth! [a] *For thou spoke the word, and all things were made.* And this was done which thou commandest.

It is a thing wonderfull and worthy of faith, surpassing humane understanding, that thou, ô my Lord God, true God and man, art wholy contained under a small forme of bread and wine, and without being consumed, art eaten by the receiver. [b] Thou ô Lord of all things, who hast neede of none, wouldest dwell in us by the Sacrament; preserve my heart and body unspotted, that with a cheerfull and pure conscience I may be often able to celebrate thy mysteries. Receive them to my everlasting salvation, which thou chiefly ordained and instituted for thy honour and perpetuall memory.

Rejoyce my soule, and give thankes

a Gen. 1. Psal. 148. b Psal. 15.

thankes unto God for so noble a gift, and singular a comfort left unto thee in this vaile of teares. For as often as thou calleſt to minde this myſtery, and receiveſt the Body of Chriſt; ſo often thou doeſt the worke of thy redemption, and art made partaker of all the merits of Chriſt: For the charity of Chriſt is never diminiſhed, and the greatneſſe of his propitiation is never exhauſted. Thou oughteſt therefore alwayes to diſpoſe thy ſelfe hereunto through a freſh renewing of the minde, and to weigh with attentive conſideration this great myſtery of thy ſalvation. So great, new, and joyfull it ought to ſeeme to thee when thou ſayeſt or heareſt Maſſe, as if the ſame day Chriſt firſt deſcending into the wombe of the Virgin were made Man, or hanging on the Croſſe did ſuffer and

dye for the salvation of mankinde.

CHAP. III.

That it is profitable to communicate often.

BEhold I come unto thee, ô Lord, that it may be well with me through thy gift, and that I may be delighted in thy holy Banquet, which thou, ô Lord, hast prepared in thy sweetnesse for the poore. Behold in thee is whatsoever I can, and ought to desire. Thou art my salvation and my redemption, my hope and my strength, my honour and my glory. Make this day therefore the soule of thy servant joyfull, [b] because I have lifted up my soule to thee, ô Lord Jesus. I desire now to receive thee devoutly and reverently; I doe long to bring thee into

a Psal. 67. b Psal. 85.

into my houſe, that with Zachæus I may deſerve to be bleſſed by thee, and numbred amongſt the ſonnes of Abraham. My ſoule thirſts to receive thy Body, my heart aſpires to be united with thee.

2 Give thy ſelfe to me, and it ſuffiſes: for beſides thee no comfort is available. I cannot be without thee, nor live without thy viſitation. And therefore I muſt come often unto thee, and receive thee as the onely remedy of my health, leaſt perhaps I faint in the way, if I be deprived of heavenly food. For ſo thou didſt ſay, moſt merciful Jeſus, preaching once to the people, and curing ſundry diſeaſes: *I will not ſend them home faſting, leaſt they faint in the way.* Deale now in like manner with me, who haſt left thy ſelfe in the Sacrament for the

a Math. 15. Matth. 18.

the comfort of thy faithfull. For thou art the sweete Refection of the soule; and he who shall eate thee worthily shall be heire, and partaker of everlasting glory. It is necessary truely for me who oftentimes fall and sinne, so quickly grow dull and faint, that by frequent prayers and confessions, and the holy receiving of thy Body, I renew, cleanse, and inflame my selfe, least perhaps by longer abstayning I fall from my holy purposes.

3 [b] *For the senses of man are prone to evil from his youth*, and unlesse thy divine remedy help him, he quickly slides to worse. This holy Communion therefore drawes backe from evil, and strengthens in good. For if I be now so often negligent, and tepid when I communicate and say Masse, what

b Gen. 8.

would it be, if I did not take this remedy, and should not seeke so great a helpe? And though every day I am not fit, or well disposed to say Masse, yet I will endeavour at convenient times to receive the divine mysteries, and make my selfe partaker of so great a grace. For this is the onely principall comfort of a faithful soule, whilest she is a pilgrim from thee in this mortal Body, that being often mindful of her God, she may receive her beloved with a devout mind.

4 O wonderfull Benignity of thy piety towards us, that thou, O Lord, Creator and Giver of life to all spirits doest vouchsafe to come unto a poore soule, and with thy whole Godhead and humanity to repleniſh her hunger! O happy minde, and blessed soule that deserves to receive thee her Lord God devoutly, and in the

Lord

receiving of thee to be repleniſhed with ſpirituall joy! O how great a Lord does ſhe entertaine! How beloved a gueſt does ſhe harbour! How pleaſant a companion does ſhe receive! How faithfull a freind does ſhe accept! How bountifull and noble a Spouſe does ſhe embrace, who is to be beloved alone all that is to be beloved, and all that may be deſired Let heaven & earth, and all their beauty be ſilent in thy preſence, my moſt ſweete Beloved For what beauty and praiſe they have proceeds from thy liberality, and ſhall not equall the beauty of thy Name, [c] *Of whoſe wiſdome there is no end.*

c Pſal. 146.

Chap. IV.

That many benefits are beſtowed on them who communicate devoutly.

O My Lord God prevent thy ſervant in the bleſſings of thy

Bb 2 ſweet-

Pſal. 146.

ſweetneſſe, that I may deſerve to approach worthily, and devoutly to thy magnificent Sacrament. Stirre up my heart to thee, and deliver me from greivous heavineſſe;[a] viſit me with thy comfort, that I may taſte in ſpirit thy ſweetneſſe which plentifully lyes hid in this Sacrament as in the fountaine. Give light alſo to mine eyes to behold ſo great a myſterie, and ſtrengthen me to beleive it with undoubted faith. For it is thy worke, not mans power. Thy ſacred inſtitution, not mans invention. For man of himſelfe is not found able to comprehend, and underſtand theſe things which ſurpaſſe even the ſubtility of Angels. What ſhall I therefore unworthy ſinner, earth and aſhes, be able to ſearch, and comprehend of ſo high and ſacred a myſterie,

[a] Pſal. 105.

2 O Lord! in simplicity of heart with a good and firme faith, and at thy commandment, I come unto thee with hope and reverence; & I do verily beleive that thou art here present in the Sacrament, God and man. Thy pleasure is therefore that I receive thee, and through charity unite my selfe to thee. Wherefore I do recurre unto thy clemency, and do begge thee to give me speciall grace, that I may wholy melt in thee, & abound with love, and heerafter never admit any exteriour comfort. For this most high and worthy Sacrament is the health of the soule and body, the remedy of all spiritual sicknesse, by it my vices are cured, passions bridled, temptations overcome, or lessened, greater grace infused, vertue begunne encreased, faith confirmed, hope strengthned, charity inflamed and enlarged.

3 For thou haſt beſtowed, and ſtill oftentimes doeſt beſtow many benefits in this Sacrament upon thy beloved who receive it devoutly, my God, Receiver of my ſoule, Reparer of humane infirmity, and the Giver of all interiour comfort. For thou imparteſt unto them much comfort againſt ſundry tribulations, and liftеſt them up from the depth of their owne dejection, to the hope of thy protection, and does interiourly recreate and illuſtrate them with a certaine new grace; in ſuch ſort that they who before Communion felt themſelves heavy and indiſpoſed, fed afterwards with this celeſtiall Meate and drinke, doe finde themſelves changed to the better; which thou ſo freely imparts to thy elect that they may truly acknowledge, and evidently experience, that they have nothing of themſelves, and what-

whatsoever grace and good they have, it is from thee. For of themselves they are cold, dull, and indevout; but by thee they are made fervent, agile, and full of devotion. For who is he that approaching humbly unto the fountaine of sweetnesse, does not carry away some little sweetnesse? or who standing by a great fire, receives not some small heate thereby? [a] And thou art a fountaine alwayes overflowing, [b] and a fire ever burning, and never decaying.

4 Wherefore if I may not draw at the full out of this fountaine, or drinke my fill, I will notwithstanding set my lips to the mouth of this heavenly conduict, that I may draw from thence some small drop to refresh my thirst, to the end I wither not wholy. And though I cannot be yet so heavenly, and inflamed

a Esa. 12. b Levit. 6. 12. 13.

flamed (as a Cherubine or Seraphine) yet will I endeavour to apply my selfe to devotion, and dispose my selfe to obtaine some small sparke of divine fire through the humble receiving of this life-giving Sacrament. And whatsoever is wanting to me, good Jesu, most holy Saviour, doe thou supply for me mercifully and graciously, who hast vouchsafed to call all unto thee, saying; [a] *Come unto me all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you.*

5 I truely labour in the sweate of my browes, [b] and am vexed with greife of heart: I am burdened with sinnes, and am troubled with temptations: I am intangled and oppressed with many evil passions, and there is none to helpe me, none to deliver and save me, but thou, my Lord God, my Saviour,

a Matth. 11. b Genes.

to whom I commit my selfe, and all mine, that thou mayest keepe me, and bring me to life everlasting. Receive me to the honour and glory of thy Name, who hast prepared thy Body and Blood to be my meate and drinke. Graunt, Lord God, my Saviour, that through frequenting thy mystery, the affection to my salvation and devotion may increase.

CHAP. V.

Of the dignity of the Sacrament, and Preistly function.

1 IF thou hadst Angelical purity, and the sanctity of Saint John Baptist, thou wert not worthy to receive or handle this Sacrament. For it is not within the compasse of the deserts of men, that man should consecrate and handle the Sacrament of Christ, to the end he

receive for food the bread of Angels. A great mystery and great is the dignity of Preists, to whom is granted that which is not permitted to Angels. For Preists only rightly ordered in the Church, have power to celebrate and consecrate the Body of Christ. The Preist is truely the Minister of God, using the words of God by the command and institution of God. But b God is there the principall Author and invisible worker, to whom is subject all that he pleases, and all that he commands does obey.

2. Thou oughtest therefore to give more credit to God Almighty in this most excellent Sacrament, then to thy owne sense, or any visible signe. And therefore thou art to come to this mystery with feare and reverence. Consider then

a Psal. 77. b Gen. 1. Psal. 148. and Rom. 4.

hen attentively, and behold what the ministery is, which is delivered unto thee [a] by the imposition of the hands of a Bishop. Loe, thou art made a Preist, and consecrated to say Masse; see now that faithfully and devoutly in due time thou offer sacrifice unto God, and carry thy selfe so as thou mayest be without reproofe. Thou hast not lightened thy burden, but art now bound in a stricter band of discipline, and art obliged to a more perfect degree of sanctity. A Preist ought to be adorned with all kinde of vertue, and to give example of good life to others. [b] His conversation should not be according to the popular and common way of men, but with the Angels in heaven, and perfect men on earth.

3 A Preist arrayed in sacred vestments, is the Vicegerent of Christ, hum-

a 1. Tim. 4. b Phil. 3.

humbly and with a proſtrate mind to pray unto God for himſelfe and all the people. [a] He hath before and behind the ſigne of the Croſſe of our Lord, to the end he may remember the Paſſion of Chriſt. He beares the Croſſe before him in the veſtment, that he may diligently behold the footeſteps of Chriſt, and fervently endeavour to follow them. He is marked with the Croſſe behind, that he may patiently ſuffer for God whatſoever adverſities ſhall be laid upon by others. He beates the Croſſe before him, that he may lament his owne ſinnes; and the ſame behind, that he may with a compaſſionate heart bewaile the offences of others, and know that he is placed as a mediator betwixt God and a ſinner. Neither ought he to ceaſe from prayer and holy oblation, till he deſerve

to

a Heb. 7.

to obtaine grace and mercy. When a Preist does celebrate, he honours God, rejoyces the Angels, edifies the Church, helpes the living, gives rest to the dead, and makes himselfe partaker of good works.

CHAP. VI.

An interrogation of the exercise before Communion.

1 WHen I weigh thy greatnesse, ô Lord, and my unworthinesse, I tremble very much, and am confounded in my selfe. For if I come not unto thee, I fly from life; and if I intrude my selfe unworthily, I incurre thy displeasure. What therefore shall I doe, my God, my Helper, and Counsellor in necessities?

2 Doe thou teach me the right way, appoint me some exercise sutable to this sacred Communion:

for

for it is profitable for me to know how I should reverently, and devoutly prepare my heart unto thee for the healthfull receiving of thy Sacrament, or for celebrating so great and divine a sacrifice.

Chap. VII.

Of the discussion of our owne conscience, and purpose of amendment.

1 ABove all things the Preist of God ought to come to celebrate, handle, and receive this Sacrament with great humility of heart, and lowly reverence, with a full faith and pious intention of the honour of God. Examine diligently thy conscience, and to thy power purge and cleanse it with true contrition, and humble confession. So as there may be nothing in thee that thou canst discerne, which may breed remorse, or hinder

der thy free acceſſe. Repent thee of all thy ſinnes in generall; in particular bewaile and greive for thy dayly offences. And if thou haſt time, confeſſe to God in the ſecret of thy heart all the miſeries of thy paſſions.

2 Lament and greive that thou art yet ſo carnall and worldly, ſo unmortified in thy paſſions, ſo full of the motions of concupiſcence, ſo ill governed in thy exteriour ſenſes, ſo often intangled with vaine phancies, ſo much inclined to exteriour things, ſo negligent in thy interiour, ſo prone to laughter and diſſolution, ſo hard to teares and compunction, ſo prone to eaſe and pleaſures of the fleſh, ſo dull to auſterity and fervour, ſo curious to heare newes and ſee fine ſights, ſo ſlacke to embrace that which tends to thy owne humiliation and contempt, ſo coveteous of abundance,

dance, so niggardly in giving, so fast in keeping, so inconsiderate in speech, so unable to keepe silence, so incomposed in manners, so importune in actions, so greedy to meate, so deafe to the Word of God, so hasty to rest, so slow to labour, so watchfull to tales, so drowsy to watch in the service of God, so hasty to make end, so wandring in attention, so negligent in saying the Office, so tepid in saying Masse, so dry in receiving, so quickly distracted, so seldome well recollected to thee, so suddenly moved to anger, so apt to take displeasure against another, so prone to judge, so severe to reprehend, so joyfull in prosperity, so weak in adversity, so often proposing much good, and performing little?

3 These and other thy defects confessed, and bewailed with sorrow and great dislike of thy own infi-

infirmity, make a firme purpose alwayes to amend thy life, and to profit more. Then with full resignation, and with thy whole will, offer thy selfe up to the honour of my Name a perpetuall sacrifice in the altar of thy heart, faithfully committing thy soule and body unto me, that thou mayest so deserve worthily to come to offer sacrifice unto God, and receive availably to thy salvation the Sacrament of my Body.

4 For there is no oblation more worthy, nor satisfaction greater for the washing away of sinnes, then to offer one selfe up unto God purely, and wholy with the oblation of the Body of Christ in the Masse, and in Communion. If a man shall doe what lyes in him, and be truely penitent, as often as he shall come unto me for grace and pardon, [a] *I live, sayes our Lord,*

[a] Ezech. 18.

(*who will not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may be converted and live.*) For I will not remember his sinnes any more, but all shall be forgiven him.

Chap. VIII.

Of the oblation of Christ on the Crosse, and resignation of our selves.

1 AS I willingly offered my self to God my Father with my hands stretched out on the Crosse, and my Body naked for thy sinnes; so as nothing remained in me that was not turned into a sacrifice for the appeasing of the divine wrath: even so must thou offer thy selfe willingly unto me in a pure and holy oblation dayly in the Masse, with all thy strength and affections, as hastily as thou art able. What doe I more require of thee, then that thou endeavour to

resigne

reſigne thy ſelfe wholy to me. I reſpect not [a] whatſoever thou giveſt beſides thy ſelfe; for I ſeeke not thy gift but thee.

2 As it would not ſuffiſe thee, if thou hadſt all but me; ſo it cannot pleaſe me give what thou wilt beſides thy ſelfe. Offer thy ſelfe to me, and give thy ſelfe wholy to God, and thy oblation will be accepted. Behold, I offered my ſelfe wholy unto my Father for thee, and gave my whole Body and Blood for thy food, that I might be wholy thine, and thou remaine mine. But if thou abideſt in thy ſelfe, and doeſt not offer thy ſelfe freely to my will; thy oblation is not entire, neither ſhall the union betwixt us be perfect. A free offering therefore of thy ſelfe into the hands of God, ought to goe before all thy actions, if thou wilt obtaine

[a] Prov. 23.

taine freedome and grace: and for this reason few are illuminated, and made interiourly free, since they doe not resolve wholy to deny themselves. My saying is undoubtedly true: * *Unlesse one forsake all, he cannot be my disciple.* If therefore thou wish to be my disciple, offer up thy selfe to me with all thy desires.

a Luke 4.

CHAP. IX.

That we must offer our selves, and all that is ours to God, and pray for all.

1. THine, a ô Lord, are all things that are in heaven and in earth. I desire to offer my selfe unto thee as free an oblation, and to remaine alwayes thine. In simplicity of heart, ô Lord, I offer my selfe unto thee this day to be thy servant, for ever to serve thee, and

a Psal. 23.

in a sacrifice of perpetuall praise. Receive me with this holy oblation of thy pretious Body which in the presence of invisible Angels attending I offer unto thee this day, that it may be for me and all the peoples salvation.

2 I offer unto thee, ô Lord, all my sinnes and offences, which I have committed in the sight of thee, and thy holy Angels, from the day wherein I could first sinne to this day, upon thy altar of reconciliation, that thou mayest consume and burne them all with the fire of thy charity, and wash out all the staines of my sinnes, and cleanse my conscience from all offence, and restore unto me thy grace which through sinne I lost, forgiving me fully all, and receiving me mercifully in the kisse of peace.

3 What can I doe for my sinnes,

but humbly confeſſe and bewaile them, and begge alwayes for mercy? [a] I beſeech thee heare me in thy aboundant mercy, where I ſtand before thee, my God. All my ſinnes moſt highly diſpleaſe me, I will never commit them againe, but am ſorry, and will be ſorry for them as long as I live, and am ready to doe pennance, and ſatisfy for them to the utmoſt of my power. Forgive me, ô God, forgive me my ſinnes, for thy holy Name ſake; ſave my ſoule which thou haſt redeemed with thy pretious Blood. Behold I commit my ſelfe to thy mercy: I reſigne my ſelfe into thy hands, do with me according to thy goodneſſe, not according to my malice and iniquity.

4 I offer alſo unto thee all my good workes, though they be very few, & imperfect, that thou mayeſt amend

a Pſal 31.

amend and sanctify them, that thou mayest make them gratefull and acceptable to thee, and mayest alwayes perfect them more and more: and likewise bring me, sloathfull and unprofitable creature, to a blessed and happy end.

5 I offer also unto thee all the godly desires of devout persons, the necessities of my parents, freinds, brethren, sisters, and all those who are deare unto me, and that have done good either to my selfe, or others for thy love; and begged and desired me to say Masse, and pray for them, and all theirs, whither they be yet alive, or already dead, that they may all receive the helpe of thy grace, and benefit of comfort, protection from dangers, delivery from paines, that freed from all evills, they may joyfully give worthy thankes to thee.

6 I offer up also unto thee my

prayers, and sacrifices of reconciliation for them especially who have in anything wronged, greived, or slandered me, or have done me any damage or displeasure; and for all those also whom I have at any time greived, troubled, or scandalized by words or deeds, knowingly or ignorantly, that it may please thee to forgive us all our sinnes & mutuall offences: take away, ô Lord, from our hearts all jealousy, indignation, wrath, and contention, and whatsoever may hurt charity, and weaken brotherly love. Have mercy, ô Lord, have mercy on those who crave mercy, give grace to them that stand in need thereof, and grant that we may be such as we may be worthy to enjoy thy grace, and attaine to life everlasting.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

That the holy Communion is not lightly to be forborne.

1. THou oughtest to have often recourse to the fountaine of grace, and divine mercy: to the fountaine of goodnesse and all purity, that thou mayest be cured of thy sinnes and passions, and deserve to be made more strong and vigilant against all deceits and temptations of the devill. The enemy knowing the greatest profit and remedy to consist in the holy Communion, endeavours by all meanes and occasions that possibly he can, to withdraw and hinder faithfull and devout persons from it.

2. For some when they dispose to prepare themselves to the sacred Communion, suffer great assaults of the devill. For that [a] wicked spi-

a Iob 2.

rit (as it is written in Job) comes amongst the sonnes of God, to trouble them with his accustomed malice, or to make them over fearfull and perplexed, that so he may diminish their affection, or by impugning them, take away their faith, to the end they may altogether abstaine from this Communion, or at least frequent it with lesse devotion. But there is no heed to be taken of his frauds and phancies, though they be never so foule and horrid; but all his phancies are to be retorted backe on his owne head. He is miserable wretch to be contemned and scorned, and through the commotions and assaults which he raises, the sacred Communion is not to be omitted.

Oftentimes also much sollicitude to obtaine devotion, and a certaine anxiety to make our confession hinders us. Doe according

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to the counsell of [a] wise men, and put away all anxiety and scruple, for it hinders the grace of God, and destroyes devotion of minde. For some small tribulation or vexation leave not the Communion, but go, confesse sooner, and willingly forgive others what offences soever they have committed against thee, and if thou hast offended any, humbly crave pardon, and God will willingly forgive thee.

4 What availes it to dilay confession a long time, or to deferre the holy Communion? Purge thy selfe with speed, spit out the venome presently, make hast to take a remedy; [b] and thou shalt finde it better then if thou didst long time deferre it. If thou omit it to day for this cause, to morrow perhaps a greater will fall out, and so thou mayest

[a] Prov. 13. [b] Math. 5.

mayeſt be hindered a long time from Communion, and become more unfit. Stirre up thy ſelfe, and ſhake of all heavineſſe, and ſlouth with the greateſt force and ſpeed thou canſt, ſince it profits nothing to continue long in diſquietneſſe, and trouble of minde; and for dayly impediments, to ſequeſter thy ſelfe from the Sacraments. Yea it very much endamages to deferre Communion long, for it is wont to breed a greivous dulneſſe. Alas! ſome cold and diſſolute people doe willingly dilay their confeſſion, and doe therefore deſire to deferre the ſacred Communion, leaſt they ſhould be bound to a greater watch over themſelves.

5 Alas! how little charity and weake devotion have they who ſo eaſily put by the ſacred Communion? How happy is he, and gratefull to God, who ſo orders his life,

and

and keepes his conſcience in ſuch purity, that he may be ready and affected to cõmunicate every day, if it were lawfull for him, & might be done without note? If ſometimes any abſtaine for humility ſake, or by reaſon of ſome lawfull impediment, he is to be commended for his reverence. But if ſlouth be the cauſe, he muſt ſtirre himſelfe up and doe what lies in him, and God will further his deſire for his good will, which God does chiefly reſpect.

6 And when he is lawfully hindered, he ſhall have alwayes a good will and pious intention to communicate, and thereby he ſhall not want the fruit of the Sacrament. For any devout perſon may every day and houre profitably, and without let, receive Chriſt ſpiritually; and yet on certaine dayes, & at the time appointed, he ought

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to receive sacramentally with affection and reverence the Body of his Redeemer, and [a] rather seeke the honour and glory of God then his owne comfort. For he communicates mystically, and is invisibly fed as often as he devoutly calls to minde the mystery of the Incarnation and Passion of Christ, and is inflamed with his love.

7. He that prepares not himselfe but when a feast drawes neare, or when custome compells him, shall be often unprepared. Blessed is he who offers himselfe up as an holocaust to our Lord, as often as he does celebrate or communicate. Be not too long or too short in saying Masse, but observe the good common manner of those with whom thou livest. Thou oughtest not to be tedious and troublesome to others; but keepe the common course

[a] 1. Cor. 11.

course according to the institution of Superiors, and rather frame thy selfe to the profit of others, then to thine owne devotion, or desire.

CHAP. XI.

That the Body of Christ, and the holy Scripture are most necessary to a faithfull soule.

O Most sweete Lord Jesu! how great is the delight of a devout soule that feastes with thee in thy Banquet, where there is no other meate offered to be eaten then thy selfe her onely beloved, and most to be desired above all the desires of her heart. And truely it would be delightfull to me to powre forth teares with an intime affection in thy presence, and with devout Magdalene to wash thy feete with teares. But where

a Luke 7.

where is this devotion? ... is so plentifull shedding of holy teares? certainly in the sight of thee and thy holy Angels my whole heart should be inflamed and dissolve into teares for joy, since I enjoy thee in the Sacrament truely present, though hidden under another forme.

2 For to behold thee in thine owne divine brightnesse, mine eyes would not be able to endure it, neither could the whole world subsist in the cleare glory of thy Majesty. In this therefore thou providest for my weaknesse, that thou covereſt thy selfe under the Sacrament. I truely have and adore him, whom the Angels adore in heaven; but I for the present time in faith, they in his proper forme without shadow: I must be content with the light of true faith, and to walke therein till the day of eve

everlasting brightneſſe breake forth, and the ſhadowes of figures paſſe away. [a] *But when that ſhall come which is perfect, the uſe of Sacraments ſhall ceaſe:* for the bleſſed in the celeſtiall glory need not the remedy of Sacraments, but rejoyce without end in the preſence of God, beholding his glory face to face, & being transformed through light of glory into the light of the Abiſſal Deity, they taſte the Word of God made fleſh, as he was from the beginning, and as he remaines for ever.

3. Mindfull of theſe wonderfull things even all ſpirituall comfort becomes tedious unto me. For as long as I behold not my Lord openly in his glory, I make no account of whatſoever I ſee or heare in this life. Thou art my witneſſe, ô God, that nothing can comfort

a 1 Cor. 13.

me, or any creature give me rest, but thou, my God, whom I desire eternally to contemplate. But this is not possible while I remaine in this mortall life. I must therefore frame my selfe to much patience, and submit my selfe to thee in all my desires. For thy Saints also who now *rejoyce with thee, ô Lord, in the kingdome of heaven; while they lived, expected in faith and great patience the coming of thy glory. What they beleived, I beleive; what they hoped for, I hope for; to the place they are already arrived, I trust I shall arrive through thy grace. In the meane time I will goe forward in faith strengthened by the example of the Saints. I have moreover holy bookes for my comfort and guide of my life; and above all these the most sacred Body for a singular remedy, and refuge.

a Heb. 10. and 11.

4. Two things indeed I perceive very necessary for me in this life, without which this miserable life would be insupportable to me. During the space of my imprisonment in this body, I acknowledge my selfe to stand in need of two things, to wit, food, and light. Thou hast therefore [a] given unto me weake creature thy sacred Body, for the refection of my soule and body; [b] *and hast set thy Word as a light unto my feete.* Without these two I cannot well live: for the Word of God is the light of my soule, and thy Sacrament the bread of life. These may be called two tables also set on the one side, and the other in the store house of the holy Church. One is the table of the holy Altar, containing the sacred Bread, that is, the pretious Body of Christ. The other is of

a John 6. b Psal. 118.

divine Law, containing holy doctrine, teaching the true faith, and leading certainly to the part of the [a] Temple within the veile where the Holy of Holies are. [b] Thanks be to thee, ô Lord Jesus, light of everlasting light for the table of holy doctrine, at which thou serveſt us by thy servants the Prophets, and Apoſtles, and other Doctors.

5 Thanks be to thee, Creator and Redeemer of man, who to manifeſt thy charity to the whole world haſt prepared a great Supper, in which not the typpicall Lambe, [c] but thine owne moſt sacred Body and Blood is offered to be eaten, rejoycing all the faithfull with thy sacred Banquet, and inebriating them with the cup of salvation, in which are all the celeſtiall delights; and the holy Angels

a) Pſal. 22. b Heb. 9. and 13. c Luk. 14. Iohn 16. Pſal. 22. Wiſd. 16.

gels doe feast with us, but with a more happy sweetnesse.

6 O how great and honourable is the office of Priesthood, to whom is granted with sacred words to consecrate the Lord of Majesty, with their lips to blesse him, with their hands to hold him, with their owne mouth to receive him, and to administer him to others! O how cleane ought those hands to be! How pure that mouth! how holy the body! how unspotted the heart of the Priest into whom the Author of purity so often enters! Nothing but holy, no word but chast and profitable ought to proceed from the mouth of the Priest, who so often receives the Sacrament of Christ.

7 Simple and chast ought his eyes to be, which are wont to behold the Body of Christ; the hands pure and lifted up to heaven, that

use to handle the Creator of heaven and earth. Unto Priests it is specially said in the Law: [a] *Be you holy, for that I the Lord God am holy.*

8 Let thy grace, almighty God, assist us, that we, who have undertaken the office of Priesthood, may serve thee worthily and devoutly, in all purity and with a good conscience; and though we cannot live in so great innocency as we ought to doe; grant us notwithstanding in due manner to bewaile the sinnes which we have committed, and in the purpose of humility and a good will, to serve thee hereafter with more fervour.

[a] Lev. 19. and 20.

CHAP. XII.

That he who is to communicate ought to prepare himselfe with great diligence for Christ.

1 I Am the Lover of purity, and Giver of sanctity: I seeke a pure

pure [a] heart, and there is the place of my rest: [b] *Make ready a great chamber adorned, and I will make with thee my Pasch, with my disciples.* If thou wilt have me come unto thee, and remaine with thee, purge the old leaven, and make cleane the dwelling of thy heart. Shut out the whole world, and all tumults of vices. [c] *Sit like a sparrow solitary upon the house top,* [d] *and thinke of thy excesses in the bitternesse of thy soule.* For every lover prepares the best and faireſt roome for his beloved, and hereby is knowne the affection of him that entertaines his beloved.

2 Knowe thou notwithstanding that the worth of no action of thine is able to make this preparation sufficient, though thou shouldest prepare thy selfe a whole year together, and shouldest thinke of

a Psal 23 b Math 5 Mark 14 Luk. 22. c 1. Cor. 5. d Exod 24.

nothing elſe. But of my mercy and grace onely thou art ſuffered to come to my Table like a beggar invited to dinner to a rich man, and he hath nothing elſe to returne him for his benefits, but to humble himſelfe, and give him thanks. Doe what lies in thee, and doe it diligently, not for cuſtome, not for neceſſity, but with feare, and reverence, and affection receive the Body of thy beloved Lord God, who vouchſafes to come unto thee. I am he that hath called thee, I have commanded it to be done, I will ſupply what is wanting in thee; come and receive me.

3 When I beſtowe the grace of devotion on thee, give thankes to thy God, not becauſe thou art worthy, but becauſe I have had mercy on thee. If thou have it not, but rather feele thy ſelfe dry, continue in prayer, ſigh and knocke,

ke, and I give not over untill thou deserve to receive some crumme or droppe of saving grace. Thou hast need of me, not I of thee; neither doest thou come to sanctifie me, but I come to sanctifie thee, and make thee better. Thou comest that thou mayest be sanctified by me, and united to me, that thou mayest receive new grace, and be stirred up anew to amendment. Doe not neglect this grace, ever prepare thy heart with all diligence, and receive thy Beloved into thy soule.

4 And thou must not onely prepare thy selfe to devotion before Communion, but carefully also conserve thy selfe therein, after thou hast received the Sacrament. For a carefull guard of thy selfe after is no lesse exacted, then devout preparation before; since a good guard after, is the best preparation

againe for obtaining of greater grace. For one becomes very much indiſpoſed thereby, if he be preſently too much powred forth to exteriour comforts. [a] Beware of much talke, remaine in ſome ſecret place, and enjoy thy God; ſince thou haſt him whom all the world cannot take from thee. I am he to whom thou oughteſt to give thy ſelfe wholy, that thou mayeſt hereafter live not in thy ſelfe, but in me without all ſollicitude.

a Prov. 10.

CHAP. XIII.

That a devout ſoule ought to deſire with all her heart, to be united with Chriſt in the Sacrament.

1 WHo will grant me this, ô Lord, that I may find thee alone, and open my whole heart unto thee, and enjoy thee as my ſoule deſires; and that no man may

may now looke upon me, or any creature move or respect me?[a] But thou alone may speake unto me, and I unto thee,[b] as the beloved is wont to speake unto the beloved, and a freind to banquet with his freind. This I pray for, this I desire that I may be wholy united to thee, and may withdraw my heart from all created things; and more and more by sacred Communion, and often celebrating, learne to taste of heavenly and everlasting things. Ah, my God! when shall I be wholy united and absorpt by thee, and altogether forgetfull of my selfe? [c]Thou in me, and I in thee, and so grant us both to continue in one.

2 [d]Thou art truly my Beloved chosen amongst thousands, in whom my soule hath taken pleasure to dwell all the dayes of her life,

a Exod. 33. b Cant. 8. c John 17. d Cant 5.

life. Thou art truly my Pacifier, in whom is the greateſt peace, and true reſt; without whom is labour, and ſorrow, and infinite miſery. [a] Thou art truly a hidden God, and thy counſell is not with the wicked; for thy converſation is with the humble and ſimple. O how [b] ſweete is thy Spirit, ô Lord! who to the end thou mighteſt ſhew thy ſweetneſſe towards thy [c] children, vouchſafeſt to feed them with the moſt ſweete bread which deſcends from heaven. There is ſurely no other Nation ſo great which hath God approaching unto it, as thou, ô God, art preſent to all thy faithfull, to whom for their dayly comfort, and for the lifting up of their hearts into heaven, thou giveſt thy ſelfe to be eaten, and enjoyed.

3 For what other Nation is there ſo

a Prov. 13. b Wiſd. 12. c Deut. 4.

so famous, as the Christian people? Or what creature under heaven so beloved, as a devout soule, into whom God enters, that he may feed her with his glorious flesh? O ineffable grace! ô admirable favour! ô infinite love singularly bestowed upon man! [a] But what shall I give unto our Lord in returne of this grace, for so high a charity? There is nothing more gratefull that I am able to give, then to bestow my heart entirely upon my God, and to unite it intimely to him. Then shall all my interiour rejoyce when my soule shall be perfectly united unto God. Then he will say to me, If thou wilt be with me, I will be with thee. And I will answere to his owne selfe, Vouchsafe, ô Lord, to remaine with me, and I will willingly be with thee. This is my whole

a Psal. 115.

whole desire, that my heart may be united unto thee.

Chap. XIV.

Of the fervent desire of some devout persons to the Body of Christ.

1 *O How great is the store of thy sweetnesse, ô Lord, which thou hast hidden for those who feare thee!* When I remember some devout persons who come unto thy Sacrament, ô Lord, with very great devotion and affection: I am then often confounded in my selfe, and blush because I come so tepidly and coldly to thy Altar, and to thy Table of holy Communion; because I remaine so dry and without affection of heart, that I am not wholy inflamed in the presence of thee, my God, nor so earnestly drawne and moved as many devout persons have beene, who out

a Psal. 30.

of

of a vehement desire of Communion, and a feeling love of heart could not withhold themselves from weeping; but with desire both of soule and body, they even from the fund of the heart longed after thee, ô God, the living Fountaine, being not otherwise able to temper or satiate their hunger, but by receiving thy Body with all joy and spirituall greedinesse.

2 O true ardent faith of theirs, being a probable argument of thy sacred presence. For these truely knowe their owne Lord in the breaking of Bread, whose hearts so vehemently burne within them, whileſt a Jesus walkes with them. Such desire and devotion, such vehement love is oftentimes farre from me. Be propitious unto me, good, sweete, and benigne Jesu, and grant thy poore beggar may at

a Luke 24.

at leaſt ſometimes feele in the ſacred Communion a little cordiall deſire of thy love, that my faith may be more ſtrengthened, hope in thy goodneſſe increaſed, and charity once perfectly inflamed, and taſting heavenly Manna, may never decay.

3 Thy mercy nevertheleſſe is able to give me even the grace I deſire, and to viſite me in thy bounteous clemency with the ſpirit of fervour, when it ſhall pleaſe thee. For though I burne not with ſo great a deſire as thoſe who are ſo ſpecially devoted to thee, yet notwithſtanding through thy grace I deſire to have this great inflamed deſire, praying and craving that I may participate with all ſuch thy fervent lovers, and be numbred among them in their holy company.

CHAP. XV.

That the grace of devotion is obtained by humility and deniall of our selves.

THOU oughtest to seeke the grace of devotion instantly, earnestly to aske it, patiently and confidently to expect it, thankfully to receive it, humbly to keepe it, diligently to worke with it, and to commit the time and manner of the supernaturall visitation to God, till he please to come. Thou oughtest chiefly to humble thy selfe when thou feelest inwardly little or no devotion, and yet not be dejected, nor greive inordinatly for it. God gives often in a short moment that which he hath long time denied: he gives sometimes in the end that which in the beginning of prayer he desired to grant.

2 If grace should be alwayes presently given, and at hand ever with a wish, it could not well be endured by a weake man. The grace therefore of devotion is to be expected with good hope, and humble patience: yet imputeto thy selfe, and thy sinnes, what is not given thee, or when it is secretly taken from thee. It is a small matter sometimes that hinders and hides grace from us, if it be to be called small, and not rather a great matter that hinders so great a good. And if thou remove this, be it great or little, and perfectly overcome it, thou shalt have thy desire.

3 For as soune as thou givest thy selfe with all thy hearte to God, and seekest not this or that for thy owne pleasure and will, but entirely restest thy selfe in him; thou shalt finde thy selfe united and quiet: for nothing will taste so

well,

well, and please thee so much, as the good pleasure of the divine will. Whosoever therefore with a simple heart directs his intention to God, and purges himselfe from all inordinate love, or dislike of any creature, shall be most fit to receive grace, and worthy of the gift of devotion. For our Lord bestowes his blessing there where he finds empty vessels: and how much more perfectly one renounces base things, and dyes more to himselfe through contempt of himselfe, so much more speedily grace comes, and enters mor plentifully, and elevates higher a free heart.

4 Then [a] shall he see, abound, and wonder, and his heart shall be dilated in him, because the hand of our Lord is with him, and he hath put himselfe into his hands for

[a] Psal. 6.

ever. Behold ſo ſhall the man be bleſſed who ſeekes God with his whole heart, and takes not his ſoule in vaine. This man deſerves great grace of divine union in receiving the holy Euchariſt, ſince he regards not his owne devotion and comfort, but the honour and glory of God.

CHAP. XVI.

That we ought to manifeſt our neceſſities to Chriſt, and crave his grace.

O Moſt ſweete and loving Lord, whom now I deſire to receive devoutly; thou knoweſt my infirmity and neceſſity which I ſuffer, with how great evils and ſinnes I am oppreſſed, how often I am greived, tempted, troubled, and defiled. I come unto thee for remedy, I crave of thee comfort and eaſe. I ſpeake to him that knowes all things, to whom all my interiour

riour is manifest, and who can onely perfectly comfort and helpe me. Thou knowest what they are whereof above all things I stand in need, and how poore I am in vertues.

2 Behold I stand before thee poore and naked, calling for grace, and craving mercy: refresh thy hungry beggar, give heate to my coldnesse with the fire of thy love, give light to my blindnesse with the brightnesse of thy presence. Turne all earthly things unto me into bitternesse, all things greivous and contrary into patience, all base and created things into contempt and oblivion. Lift up my heart unto thee into heaven, and suffer me not to wander upon earth. Be thou onely sweete and delightsome unto me from henceforth for ever more. For thou onely art my meate and my drinke,

my love and my joy, my delight and all my good.

3 O that with thy presence thou wouldest wholy inflame, burne, and change me into thee; that I might be made one spirit with thee through the grace of interne union, and the melting of burning love! Suffer me not to goe from the hungry and dry, but deale mercifully with me, as thou hast oftentimes dealt wonderfully with thy Saints. What marvaile if I should be wholy inflamed by thee? and dye to my selfe, since thou art fire alwayes burning and never decaying, love purifying the heart and enlightening the understanding?

CHAP. XVII.

Of the fervent love and vehement affection to receive Christ.

VVIth great devotion and burning love, with all fervour

fervour of affection of heart, I desire to receive thee, ô Lord, as many Saints and devout persons have desired in receiving thee, who were most pleasing to thee through holinesse of life, and most ardent devotion. O my God, my everlasting love, my whole good, my happinesse without end! I would gladly receive thee with the most vehement desire, and worthy reverence that any of the Saints ever had, or could feele.

2. And though I am unworthy to have all those feelings of devotion, yet I offer unto thee the whole affection of my heart, as if I alone had all those most gratefully inflamed desires. Yea whatsoever also a devout minde can conceive and desire, all that with most high reverence and inward affection I present and offer unto thee. I desire to reserve nothing to my selfe,

but freely and most willingly to sacrifice my selfe & all mine unto thee. My Lord God, my Creator, & my Redeemer, I desire to receive thee this day with such affection, reverence, praise, and honour; with such gratitude, worthinesse, and love; with such faith, hope, and purity; as thy most blessed Mother the glorious Virgin Mary received and desired thee; when she humbly and devoutly answered the Angel, who declared unto her the mystery of thy Incarnation, saying, [a] *Behold the handmaid of our Lord, let it be done unto me according to thy word.*

3 And as thy blessed forerunner, the most excellent amongst the Saints, [b] John the Baptist leaped cheerfully with joy of the holy Ghost, whilest he was yet shut up in his mothers wombe. And afterwards seeing Jesus walking among men,

a Luke 1. b Luke 1.

men, humbling himself very much, said with devout affection, As the freind of the Bridegrome that stands and hears him, rejoyces with joy, for the voice of the Bridegrome: So wish I also to be inflamed with holy desires, and to offer my selfe up to thee with my whole heart. And therefore I offer and present unto thee the jubilations, ardent affections, mentall excesses, and supernaturall illuminations, and heavenly visions of all devout hearts, with all the vertues and praises celebrated, and to be celebrated by all creatures in heaven and earth, for my selfe and all such as are commended to my prayers, that by all thou mayst be worthily praised and glorified for ever.

4 Receive my affections, ô my Lord God, and desires of infinite praise and immense benediction,

a Iohn 3.

which are due to thee according to the measure of thy unspeakable greatnesse. These I yeeld, and desire to yeeld to thee every day and moment, and doe intreate and invite all the heavenly spirits, and all thy faithfull, with prayers and affections to give thee thankes and praises together with me.

5 Let all people, tribes, and tongues praise thee, and with high jubilation and ardent devotion [a] magnifie thy holy and mellifluous Name; and let all who reverently and devoutly celebrate thy most high Sacrament, and receive it with full faith, deserve to finde grace and mercy at thy hands, and pray humbly for me sinfull creature. And when they shall have obtained their desired devotion and joyfull union, and shall depart from the sacred heavenly Table well com-

[a] Psal. 118.

comforted, and marvellously refreshed, let them vouchsafe to remember my poore and needy soule.

Chap. XVIII.

That a man be not a curious searcher of this Sacrament, but an humble follower of Christ, submitting his sense unto faith.

1 THou oughtest to beware of curious & unprofitable searching into this most profound Sacrament, if thou wilt not sinck into the depth of doubt. [a] He that is a searcher of Majesty, shall be oppressed by glory. God is able to worke more then man can understand. A pious and humble inquiry of truth is tolerable, so he be alwayes ready to be taught, and doe endeavour to walke in the sound pathes of the ancient Fathers doctrine.

a Prov. 25.

2 Blessed is that simplicity, that forsakes the difficult wayes of questions, and goes on in the plaine and assured path of Gods commandments. Many have lost devotion, whilest they would search after high things. Faith and sincere life are exacted at thy hands, not height of understanding, nor the depth of the mysteries of God. If thou doest not understand, or conceive those things that are under thee, how shalt thou be able to comprehend those that are above thee? Submit thy selfe to God, and let thy sense be subject to faith, and the light of knowledge shall be given thee in that degree, as shall be profitable and necessary for thee.

3 Some are greivously tempted about faith, and the Sacrament, but that is not to be imputed to them, but rather to the enemy. Doe not regard nor dispute with thy thoughts,

thoughts, neither doe thou give answere to the doubts moved by the enemy, but beleive the words of God, beleive his Saints and Prophets, and the wicked serpent will flye from thee. It is oftentimes very profitable to the servant of God to suffer such things. For he tempts not infidels and sinners, whom he already securely possesses, but he sundry wayes tempts and vexes the faithfull and devout.

4 [a] Goe forward therefore with a sincere and undoubted faith, and come to the Sacrament with unfaigned reverence. And whatsoever thou art not able to understand, commit securely to Almighty God. God deceives thee not: he is deceived that trusts too much to himselfe. God walkes with the simple, reveales himselfe to the humble, gives understanding to little

[a] Psal. 18. Matth. 14.

little ones, openes the sense of pure mindes, and hides grace from the curious and proude. Humane reason is weake and may be deceived, but true faith cannot be deceived.

5 All reason and naturall search ought to followe faith, not to goe before it, nor impugne it. For faith and love doe cheifly excell, and worke in a hidden manner in this most blessed and excellent Sacrament God, who is everlasting, and of infinite power, does great and inscrutable things in heaven, and in earth, and there is no searching of his wonderfull workes. If the workes of God were such, as might be easily comprehended by humane reason, they were not to be called wonderfull and unspeakable.

FINIS.

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